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With the Greeks in Thessaly

W. Kinnaird Rose

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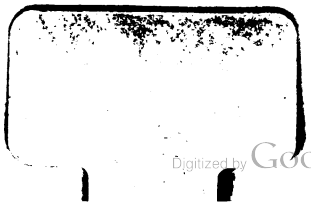

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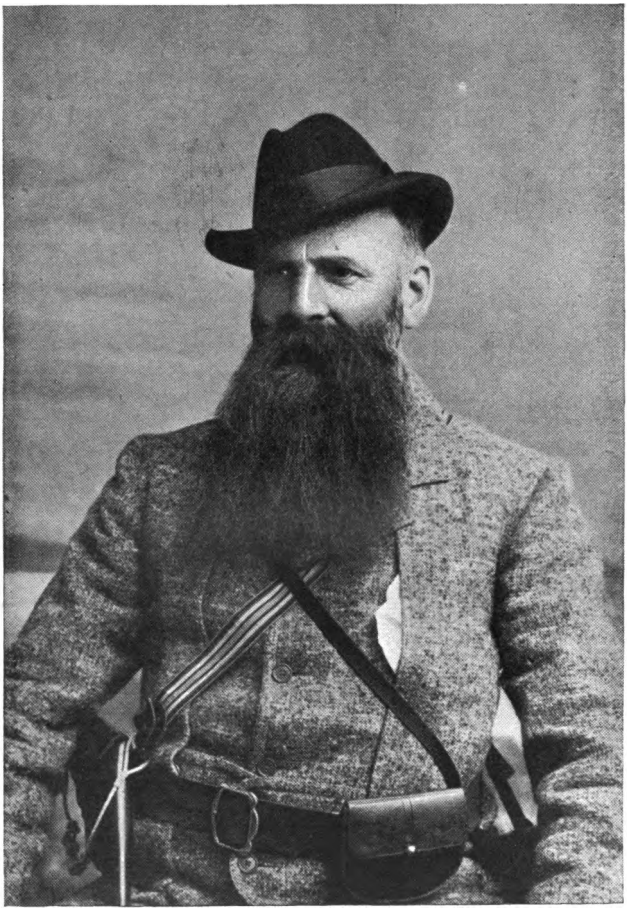

W. KINNAIRD ROSE

Front

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WITH THE GREEKS IN THESSALY

BY

W. KINNAIRD ROSE

BARRISTER-AT-LAW; CAPTAIN, QUEENSLAND DEFENCE FORCE; SPECIAL WAR CORRESPONDENT FOR REUTER'S IN GRECO-TURKISH WAR

WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. T. MAUD
MAP, AND PLANS

METHUEN & CO.
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PREFACE

THIS book is based on the despatches which I sent from Greece to REUTER'S as their special war-correspondent. These were received with so much favour by the press and the public in this country and America, that I have been induced to embody them in a connected narrative of my experiences during the very brief but deeply interesting campaign. In the descriptions of the various engagements of which I was a witness—I had almost said in which I had taken part—there is little amplification of the originals forwarded by telegraph, and which were generally written on the field, while the picture was vivid and the atmosphere of battle was still round me.

The brief sketch of the history of the Ethniké Etairia, in the opening chapter, is founded on information picked up from several members whose acquaintance I made in Greece, and from facts supplied me by my friend, Mr. Johnstone,

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the able resident correspondent in Athens of the *Manchester Guardian.*

Mr. W. T. Maud, the very accomplished artist of the *Graphic*, was my good comrade in many of the most stirring scenes of the campaign, and I had the pleasure of watching him, often under fire, making his powerful and picturesque sketches. Through the courtesy of the Proprietors of the *Graphic*, my publishers have been able to reproduce many of his beautiful pictures. Other of the illustrations have been drawn for the present publication from Mr. Maud's rough sketches.

The plans of the battles of Mati, Velestino, and Domokos have been drawn from the rough sketches which I made in my note-book to aid me in my descriptions of the engagements, in exactly the same way as I made shorthand notes of the different phases of the battles. They do not profess to be as exhaustive or as absolutely accurate as a military engineer's survey, but I hope they will enable the reader to follow the context with additional interest.

Recent events in Thessaly are likely to attract tourists to that province of Greece, for the scenes of an historical campaign have a fascination all their own. I have been asked since my return what kind of outfit should be taken. Well, what has to be guarded against, are the extremes and

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sudden variations of temperature, both in the mountains and the plains. During one of the days of the battles round Mati, my friend Mr. Williams noted a fall of twelve degrees Fahrenheit in ten minutes; and between mid-day and night temperature the range was sometimes no less than fifty-five degrees. Under the advice of Mr. Donald C. Frazer, manager of the well-known firm of outfitters, Charles Baker and Co., Limited, Ludgate Hill, I took with me a riding-suit of Scotch Tweed—in colour a light-brown and white mixture. If sometimes a little warm at mid-day, when the thermometer would run up to eighty-nine and ninety degrees, it was a complete protection at night against chills and fevers in the plains and in the lofty table-lands and mountains, as well as in open boats at sea. I could recommend nothing better for travellers or campaigners in similar climates.

W. K. R.

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WITH THE GREEKS IN THESSALY

CHAPTER I

LONDON TO ATHENS

IN the first week of March, I received a commission from Mr. Herbert De Reuter, managing director of Reuter's Telegram Company, as their special War Correspondent in Greece.

My instructions were to proceed with all possible speed to the Thessalian frontier and there wait events. Colonel Vassos' expedition to Crete had forced the hands of the Great Powers, in relation to that cradle of Greek revolt against the deliberate government by massacre by the unspeakable Turk. Moreover, it gave dramatic interest to the heroic efforts of the Cretan Greeks rightly struggling to be free. The Sultan, prohibited by the blockade of the International fleet from landing his Asiatic hordes on the gem of the Ægean Archipelago, was pouring into Macedonia battalion after battalion

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of Anatolian troops, and marshalling his Moslem hosts along the Thessalian frontier and in the defiles of Epirus.

From the housetops of the Chancelleries of Europe proclamation was made that the dogs of war would not be unleashed and that peace would be maintained at all hazards. Yet few students of Eastern politics believed in their heart of hearts in this vain cry. While optimist diplomats called "peace," came the moaning echo of "no peace" from the mountains of Crete, from the snow-mantled shoulders of Olympus, the peaks and passes of Kassia which divide Macedonia from Thessaly, and the blue and white crests of the Pindus range which cuts Epirus from Northern Greece.

The air was charged with the electric forces of battle, and the only question was when the war-cloud would burst. My object was to be on the scene ere it precipitated.

Travelling night and day, I reached Brindisi on March 31. While waiting there for the steamer *Sumatra* to start for Piræus, which it did late in the evening, I met Lieutenant Avrid Wester, of the staff of the Swedish army, who was going out to the same destination as a Correspondent for journals published in Stockholm and Helsingfors. Lieutenant Wester was destined to be my com-

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panion on many an eventful occasion. Another passenger was a Swedish engineer, whose enthusiastic Phil-Hellenism was impelling him to the theatre of war as a volunteer. A fever of combat had certainly seized the gentleman, and its manifestations were, to say the least, most entertaining. He flourished a huge dirk after the manner of the brigand in a transpontine theatre; he played with a revolver as a child would with its favourite toy; and when not delivering imaginary charges against imaginary Turks, he spent his time at the saloon piano composing a Grand March for the Volunteer Army which he firmly believed was to materially aid the Greeks in driving the Sultan from Europe. The next time I saw him, as will be told in the sequel, his enthusiasm had considerably cooled.

We reached Corfu about noon of April 1, and time was afforded for a run through the picturesque town with its exquisite views of hill and vale, and bright blue bays, and its semi-oriental streets and bazaars. The Royal Palace is interesting, built as it was for the Lord High Commissioner during the British protectorate. It contains portraits of George IV., of several of the British Governors, including Lord Guildford and Sir Thomas Maitland, the Presidents of the Ionian Senate and of the original Knights of St. Michael and St. George. But what was of more

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interest to me was the ancient citadel or Fortezza Vecchia, reminding one of Ehrenbreitstein on the Rhine or Stirling Castle. Much of the citadel is semi-ruinous, but the ramparts, some of which date back to 1500, are exceedingly strong. Whether the citadel would be of much use under conditions of modern warfare is a question that need not be considered, as under the terms of the surrender of the Ionian Islands to Greece, Corfu was recognized by Europe as neutral territory. The long ascent through the covered ways and by successive tiers of ramparts to the crowning tower is worth the trouble, for the sake of the magnificent panorama of town and island, and the view across the Straits to the blue Albanian hills.

It was striking to find here a great fortress, practically without a garrison. Only a company of recruits held the place and furnished one or two easy-going sentries at the drawbridge over the moat or at the entrance to the ancient armoury. The ordinary garrison, we were informed, had been transferred to Arta.

Piræus was reached on Saturday morning, and we drove at once to Athens.

However tempting, it is not my purpose to dilate on the classic city, but I could not help being struck with the vast changes which had been made

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since I had last visited it eighteen years before. Instead of a semi-squalid, half-oriental town, it has now grown into a city of spacious boulevards, of splendid open streets, lined literally with marble palaces. Greek merchants and bankers from all parts of the world, inspired by a patriotism which has something noble in it, have built these grand mansions, and reside, for a period of the year at any rate, in the rejuvenated capital of their native land. In the lower part of the town, however, there is still something to be found of old Athens—narrow and not too clean thoroughfares and bazaars, the heritage of the Turk. But dominating all, in solemn contrast to the bizarre modernity of the new town, is the Acropolis, with its matchless temples and fanes, glorious even in their ruin and decay.

My business, however, was not to study archæology, but the people in relation to the prospects of hostilities between Greece and Turkey.

The atmosphere seemed to glow with the war-fever. The centre of public life, that is to say of the open-air life of the Athenians, is Constitution Square. There, in its numerous cafés overflowing into the gardens of the Place, thousands of eager-eyed and nervously-excited men discussed with active gesture the news of the day.

My dear old friend, the late Professor Lorimer,

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of Edinburgh University, when prating to his students on the Law of Nature, held that almost never was the voice of the people the voice of God. It was generally, he emphasized in his sweet thin voice, the voice of the Devil. "A notation of the cries in the air at a time of surgent public excitement," says George Meredith, "can hardly yield us music." The Athenian shouts for war were certainly not melodious. "Crete must be annexed to the Fatherland. Epirus must be joined to Greece: it had been awarded by the Berlin Congress in 1878, and it was monstrous that the Sultan had been permitted by the Powers to put the decision of the Congress to scorn."

The café politician talked excitedly of the indomitable Greek soldiery, of the brave deeds of the War of Independence in 1828, and even an occasional reference was made to Marathon and Thermopylæ. "If the Sultan will not at once submit to the cession of Crete and Epirus and the correction of the Thessalian frontier, then the Greek army must march across the passes of the Kassia range, knock at the gates of Salonica, whence, if the Sultan will not heed, then the victorious march must be continued to Constantinople!"

The restless crowd, which "has no more imagination than serves to paint the future in the colours of the past," found their own excited arguments

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perfectly convincing. The patriotic effusions of the Ethniké Etairia had done their work. The Greeks, it was firmly believed, were invincible, and the Turks were only a decadent force. What a rude and bitter disillusionment had the Greeks to experience!

Excitement in the city was not confined to the declamation of the pavement politicians. All day long companies of armed men were marching through the streets. Every steamer arriving at Piræus landed hundreds of reservists, recruits, and volunteers, not only from the Isles of Greece but from every quarter of the Levant, from North Africa, from Western Europe, and even from America, South Africa, and Australia. They were attired in every variety of costume—the baggy pants and braided jacket of the Albanian; the fustanella, or plaited linen kilt, of the mountaineers, with picturesque jacket and tasselled fez; the heavy woollen cloak and tight white breeches of shepherds and peasants from plain and mountain on the mainland, and even suits of Western tweed. The motley corps paraded the principal boulevards with banners flying, singing patriotic songs and cheered by the Athenian crowd. Now and again a battalion of regular troops would pass to the parade-ground for drill, headed by a few trumpeters who blared out an unsteady march. Enthusiasm was certainly

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not inspired by the spirit-stirring drum or by the rousing strains of brass and reed band. The want of military music in the army, I may say parenthetically, was somewhat notable. I believe there is only one military band in Greece, and that is always stationed at Athens. Throughout the campaign, indeed, there was very little of the pomp of war.

Brief reference has already been made to the Ethniké Etairia. Some idea of how Greece was driven into the unhappy war is impossible without a brief description of this extraordinary organization, which for a time actually directed the fortunes of the Hellenic kingdom, independent of the Executive Government.

Secret societies have played an important part in the history of Greece in modern times. In the first decade of the present century, when the struggle for independence took formidable shape, a society called the Philiké Etairia fostered patriotic sentiment amongst the scattered Greeks throughout the south-east of Europe. It is alleged that their intrigues undermined Greek predominance in Moldavia and Wallachia, if not also in Macedonia, but the influence of the society had at any rate this effect—that it taught the Greeks of Bœotia and Attica, of Ætolia and of the Peloponnesos, that the unequal struggle against Turkish oppression was

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not hopeless. After heroic efforts and cruel sacrifices, the Powers of Europe intervened and independence was secured, although for only a limited portion of geographical Greece. Very shortly after Otho the Bavarian Prince was placed on the throne, the more enlightened Greeks discovered that they had only exchanged the oppression and extortion of Turkish Pashas for a despotism based on the worst models of Central Europe. Every symptom of awakening national life was repressed. Free institutions were denied. Education of the people, for which the Greeks always had a passionate desire, was discountenanced. The course of justice was tainted, and Governmental extravagance was unchecked. Despotic methods of government invariably breed secret associations, and there was formed a society called the "Vigilance Committee," which had considerable influence in bringing about, no doubt with the covert assistance of the Governments of some of the Western Powers, the downfall of the Bavarian dynasty.

When the Berlin Congress in 1878 revised the Treaty of San Stefano, Bosnia and Hertzigovina were placed under the protectorate of Austria, an extension of territory was given to Montenegro, and a promise was made that Thessaly and Epirus would be joined to Greece. It was not until 1881 that this promise was partially redeemed by the

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inclusion of Thessaly in the Greek kingdom. Epirus and Greek-Macedonia however were, despite the decision of the Berlin Congress, left to the tender mercy of the Turk. Ever since there has been an active agitation in Epirus and in parts of Macedonia for the extension of the Greek kingdom to what is popularly known as "the line of the Berlin treaty." This agitation was directed by several secret societies, of which the most important were the "Charitable Brotherhood of Epirotes," the "Macedonian Brotherhood," and the "Hellenismos," the most important being the first.

Epirotes have long been famous for their enterprise and intelligence, and the young men of the province have formed, for many decades, a no mean proportion of the students at the University of Athens. Apart from the gross cruelty and misgovernment to which Epirotes have been subjected by the Turkish governing Pashas, their spirit and intelligence resent their race being continued under the iron heel of Turkish officials.

It was impossible to organize a universal insurrection against the dominant Turk, but there can be no doubt that the secret societies referred to encouraged, if they did not inspire altogether, the petty risings which have periodically disturbed Epirus and Macedonia during the last few years, and threatened every now and again to bring

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about the dreaded war in the Balkan peninsula, which, it is generally supposed, will be the prelude to the division of the heritage of the Sick Man and the end of the reign of the Moslem Turk in Europe.

Of course there was sympathy throughout redeemed Greece with the ends and aspirations of these local brotherhoods, and the idea was conceived of uniting them all in one grand association to be called the Ethniké Etairia. The work of organization of this national society was begun two or three years ago with its head-centre in Athens and a dozen subsidiary centres in various parts of Greece, and wherever there was a large Greek population in the Turkish empire. Members take an oath of secrecy and of allegiance to the idea of the expansion of the fatherland and the extension of Hellenic influence throughout the south-east of Europe. A great impetus was given to the Ethniké Etairia by a religious demonstration which was made on Sunday, November 1, 1896. Word was passed to all the associates of the society that a special service would be held on that date to commemorate the patriotic Greeks who had fallen victims during the several abortive risings that had taken place in Epirus and Macedonia, and a special prayer was prepared to be read by the priests during the service. The churches,

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not only throughout Greece, redeemed and unredeemed, but in Venice, Paris, Vienna, London, New York, etc., were thronged on the appointed day, and the fact that almost every Greek had joined the national society was proved when the priest began to recite the special commemorative prayer: the whole congregation knelt and devoutly took part in it.

It was after this that the Ethniké Etairia began to make its influence felt in public affairs. Michel Melaes, an ex-deputy of the Greek Chamber and formerly president of the Municipal Council in Athens, was appointed president of the society in dealing with the outside world. Funds flowed in from every quarter of the globe and preparations, more or less secret, were made for the material assistance of patriotic movements in any part of unredeemed Greece. Then came the rising in Crete, the flight of the Christian refugees to Athens, the excitement throughout Greece over the massacres in Crete by the Moslem population and the Turkish soldiery, and the failure of the Powers of Europe to bring about a peaceful settlement of the affairs of the island. The Ethniké Etairia saw that the psychological moment had arrived. A message was sent to King George offering funds and stores and men, if only the Executive Government would come to the aid of

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their Cretan brothers and sisters. The result was the despatch of the expedition under Colonel Vassos, the forcing of the hands of the Great Powers, and the precipitation of the long-foretold crisis in the Eastern Question.

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CHAPTER II

ATHENS TO THE FRONTIER

DURING the three days I was in Athens, of which one was a Sunday, I was busy from morning to night making preparations for a possible campaign. I was advised to buy horses and take them to Larissa with me, as it was impossible to get them at the front—the Government having requisitioned every animal worth having. Most of my brother-correspondents, English and foreign, had had, it was said, to return to Athens from Larissa, for the sole purpose of obtaining mounts. I went about from stable to stable, but was offered nothing better than broken-down cab hacks. I therefore resolved to chance obtaining horses for myself and dragoman nearer the scene of operations. I acquired however, after some search, a good English saddle and bridle for myself, a native saddle for my at-

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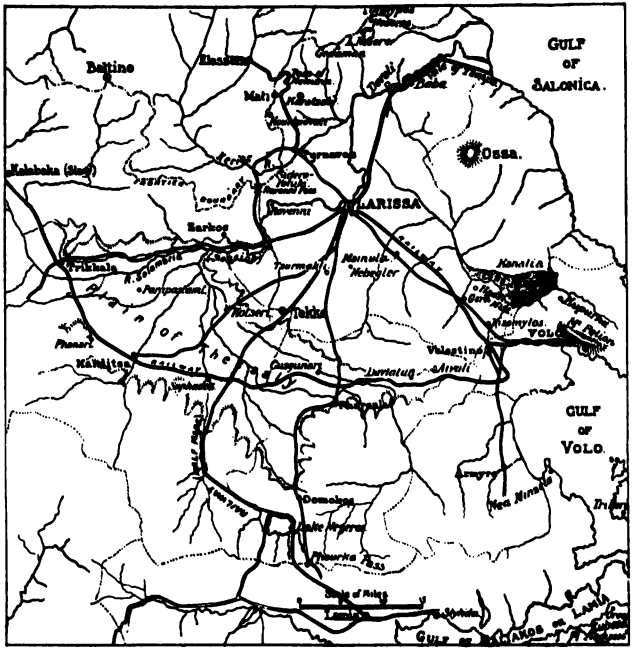

SKETCH MAP OF THE SEAT OF WAR IN THESSALY

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tendant, and several other indispensable requisites for rough campaigning.

All the young, active dragomen had been picked up by my *confrères*, some of whom had been weeks on the spot, but I fell back with confidence on the dragoman whom I had had with me in Greece eighteen years before—Angelos Melissinos, the best and most suave of *compagnons de voyage* in days of peace. Angelos certainly made the way smooth for me at the outset of my expedition, and if he failed when the real work of the campaign began, it was because he was getting up in years, little suited to the stress and hardship of field-work, and that he had previously informed me that he had no anxiety, with a large family to support, to face either Turkish shells or bullets.

I am not a courtier. I was one of the few correspondents distinguished by not seeking an interview with the democratic King of Greece. But I found time to make formal calls on several Ministers, for the purpose of obtaining facilities for my work.

M. Delyannis I interviewed at the Treasury. He is tall, full though loose-bodied, with a fine head ; hair, whiskers, and moustache turning grey. The face is full of character, the eyes are alert, giving the impression of a keen, subtle mind. His reception was cordial courtesy itself, but as my

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visit was only one of compliment, politics were eschewed.

M. Skouzes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I saw at his office. Handsome in person, though not of commanding height, he would attract attention in any company. His clear-cut, intellectual features show a man of power, and his habit at once indicates a man of activity and business aptitude. M. Skouzes gracefully declined to discuss the political situation, but he gave me a letter to the Minister of War, with the assurance that all the facilities granted to other correspondents would be afforded me in the discharge of my mission.

The Minister of War, M. Maximas, I did not see personally. He was too fully engaged, as was very evident from the crowd of soldiers of every rank and degree who were rushing about and through every corner of the Chancellerie. But through his aide-de-camp I received a letter of introduction to the Crown Prince as Commander-in-Chief.

Hasty preliminaries having been settled, I fixed to take the steamer *Thessalia*, announced to sail on Monday evening, April 5, for Volo. When I got to Piræus about six o'clock, we found that the steamer had not yet arrived in port, and that it would be several hours before we could start. Left

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to cool our heels on the busy quays of Piræus, I had a look in at several of the cafés, where the war spirit was as ebullient as in Athens itself.

At last the *Thessalia* arrived, and we got on board about eleven o'clock. The cargo inwards was mainly lambs from Thessaly, and these having been discharged into lighters, the ship was loaded up with bread, flour, and munitions for the troops at the front. The small steamer was crowded with soldiers, and the first taste of the discomforts of a campaign was obtained, in literally squeezing through dense packed human beings and in the vain attempt to stretch one's legs on the floor of a stuffy little cabin. What with the cramped position, the din of the loading-derricks, and the constant movement on deck, there was little sleep.

I was glad when dawn came to get on deck, where I found the steamer was rounding Cape Calonna — the scene of Falconer's well-known poem of the "Shipwreck." We passed close under the promontory of Sunium, crowned by the columns of a stately temple, which in the soft early light stood out magnificently, like an ivory carving. The scenery all along the coast, out and in between the islands, is exceedingly fine, and reminds one continually of many parts of the West Highlands and of the Hebrides, with the

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added beauty of an intensely blue sky. In the course of the forenoon we were off Rhamnus, the landing-place for Marathon, and being on warlike thoughts intent, glasses were fixed on the celebrated plain and pass where the Greeks obtained such signal victory over the Persian invader.

The approach to Chalcis, which was reached about mid-day, reminds one of the windings of the Kyles of Bute, though the shores are barren of the sweet woodlands which adorn the latter.

The swing-bridge, which connects the mainland with the island of Eubœa, was opened in response to the long whistle of the steamer, and the swift, mysterious current, which changes its direction for some unfathomed physical cause every four hours, being favourable, we passed through the narrow channel of Euripos with ease. Few places in Greece are more picturesque than Chalcis, with its Venetian castle, its mediæval fortifications, its broken aqueduct of classic times, its ruined palaces and bizarre modern villas.

Late in the afternoon we reached Limni, where a great fête was in progress in honour of the anniversary of the declaration of the independence of Greece. The town, in the very heart of a deep bay, is built on the face of a range of hills which girts the semi-circle of the bay. The soldiers on board determined to take part in the rejoicings

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with the townspeople, and they began to fire their rifles in the air, enjoying as children do the triple echo from the hills. In this waste of ammunition several officers joined. Indeed, throughout the voyage, a flight of gulls, a passing caique, was sufficient excuse for a senseless fusillade. As the steamer called at every port in the Straits of Atalanti, it was quite dark ere we reached the Straits of Trikeri, where a sharp look-out was kept for the International Squadron, as reports prevailed at Piræus before we left that the blockade of the Greek coast was to be made effective that morning, and if so, there was the possibility of our passage being stopped. There was no sign of warships however, and Volo was reached without incident at six o'clock on the morning of the 7th of April.

Volo lies at the head of the gulf of the same name and at the sea-base of classic Pelion. It is a busy port with many manufactories, of which the chief is that of cigarettes. Here, indeed, the great bulk of so-called Egyptian and Turkish cigarettes are made. A modern town with spacious streets and tramways skirts the shore of the gulf for a couple of miles. The grand face of Pelion is dotted with villages in the most picturesque confusion, and quaint houses gleam from terraces, cliffs, and innumerable jutting crags. Although

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the third most important town in Greece, Volo is entirely unprotected in a military sense. True, there is one small earthwork on the shoulder of a steep hill at the east end of the town, but it never was mounted with a single gun. The barracks and military stores were on open ground at the west end, not far from the new harbour works. Here was the depôt of supplies, guns, ammunition, etc., for the army at the frontier. It was characteristic of the loose manner in which most military matters were conducted, that I was permitted to enter the depôt yard unchallenged, and inspect the guns, limbers, transport-carts, and so on. By and by an officer came up and politely invited me to inspect the stores, which were contained in a double row of sheds. In one of these sheds I found half-a-score of men busy filling shells, and one of them was shaking the powder home by tapping the shell with a steel nut-lever! I did not linger in that shed. Afterwards I spent some time in watching the drilling of the troops sent up from Athens, only a small proportion of which were in uniform.

We left by train for Larissa early in the afternoon. The railway runs along the east side of an open valley, fertile in the flat with crops of barley already yellowing to the harvest. But the sides of the mountain are piled with white and grey

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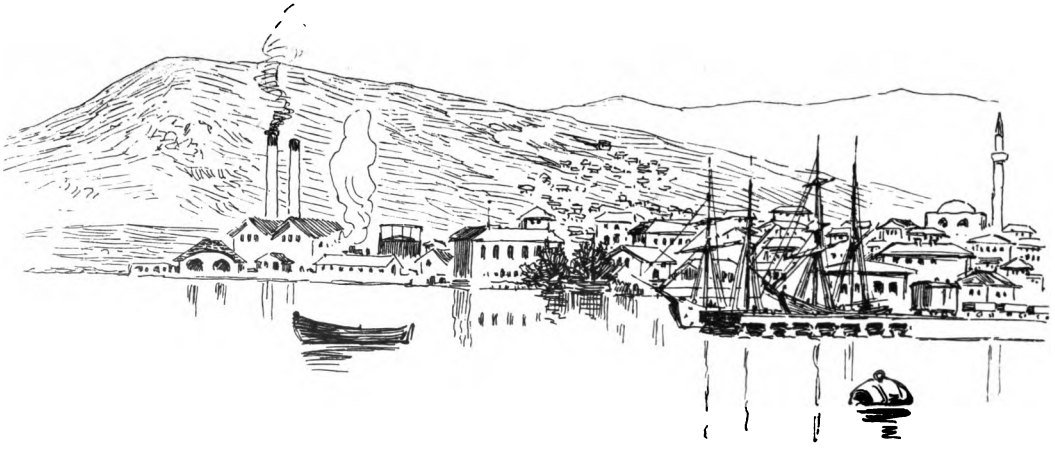

VOLO: WITH PELION IN THE BACKGROUND

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boulders or covered with a stumpy brushwood. As the train winds up the ascent of the defile of Peilav-Tepe, afterwards spoken of as "the Volo Pass," a very fine view of the harbour of Volo is obtained—a cup of blue with jewels on its lips formed by the gleaming white houses on the face of Pelion. The descent into the plain winds round and round the ancient Roman road over the pass, and then the railway runs in a straight line for two or three miles, till Velestino is reached—the home of the Greek poet Rhigas, cruelly done to death by the Turks in 1798. Velestino, which is prettily situated among groves of mulberry, peach, and other trees, and perennially flowing streamlets, was destined to be the scene of one of the memorable battles of the campaign. The railway hence curls round foot-hills in the direction of the great Karla lake, above which, on the thither side, rise the peaks of the ridge of Mavro Vouni, which unites Pelion with Ossa. The run across the great plain of Thessaly is somewhat monotonous, but time permits to admire its fertility and to wish that its great agricultural possibilities were fully developed.

There is an agrarian question in Thessaly which may have had something to do in stimulating the desire for war. Large areas of the plain were Vacouf or Mohammedan church lands, and when Thessaly was expropriated to Greece in 1881, the

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Sultan handed these lands over to favourite Pashas and Beys. The latter impose heavy rents on the peasantry and their revenues are spent in Constantinople, never a drachma being devoted to improvements or to the development of the immense resources of the country. Great part of the plain requires draining, as in the winter-time it becomes practically a marsh. The villages are mean, the houses for most part little better than hovels, but it must be confessed that here as throughout Greece generally, there was no abject poverty in the sense that we know it in our large towns. The Moslem absentee landlords, it is alleged, escape contributing to the government of the country, as the Greek revenue is mainly derived in Thessaly from a stock-tax, which of course the rural tenants have to pay. There seems no doubt that a nascent hope was in the minds of the peasantry that they would somehow, as a result of war, escape a rent-charge which presses heavily upon them, and that they would become practically the owners of their holdings. The cultivation is rude, the implements of tillage are primitive, though here and there one comes upon a modern plough. Withal, the crops of barley and wheat were fine. The call to arms had withdrawn the peasants from their fields, and the ploughed land for the millet crop was left unsown. In the vine-

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yards and what we might call market-gardens, the culture attains almost perfection. Good government and moderate taxation are, with the patient industry of the natives, all that are necessary to make of this Thessalian plain a perfect paradise.

Larissa was reached between five and six o'clock. As the railway-station is a mile from the town, a general view of the latter is obtained in the drive thither. It presents at first view quite an Eastern appearance, with thirty minarets shooting their rounded and pointed shafts above the closely-packed houses.

At one period, Larissa was encircled with strong walls, and the foundations of the angle-forts may still be traced, while the moat has not been wholly filled up. Barracks capable of accommodating, it is said, 8000 troops stand outside the walls at the west end of the town. The most prominent feature of Larissa is the citadel, which was the site of an amphitheatre when the town was the capital of ancient Thessaly, and some remains of which can still be traced. It stands on a rock of the crag-and-tail order, the approach being by a gentle ascent from the west side, with a steep cliff-like face to the north-east overlooking the plain to Tyrnavos and the Maluna Pass. A steep path on the north-west side leads directly down to the

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banks of the Peneios, which is here crossed by an ancient bridge of nine pointed arches. The town contains a Turkish quarter, where some 1500 Turks lived, and these—notwithstanding the war-fever—moved freely and without molestation among the motley Christian population.

Larissa was on my arrival agitated with the war-fever. The streets were crowded with soldiers and would-be soldiers. Every man, whether in uniform or not—and variety of picturesque costumes was endless—wore a bandolier with 150 or more cartridges, and had a rifle slung over his shoulder. The centre of activity was the great square in front of the Court House, now converted into a barrack, and there coffee or oozoo (a kind of mastic) valiants chattered of the march of the Greek army to Salonica. So overrun was the town with soldiers of every degree, that it was with some difficulty I obtained accommodation for the night in the house of a Greek carpenter, but I afterwards established my head-quarters in a room at the Hotel Olympus, so called probably because it commands a magnificent view of the triple-peaked Home of the gods.

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CHAPTER III

ON THE FRONTIER

THE morning after my arrival in Larissa, I paid a visit to the head-quarters of the Crown Prince, situated on the east side of a handsome square adjoining the Turkish quarter. I presented my letter of introduction from the Minister of War, but did not then, nor on any subsequent occasion, have a personal interview with his Royal Highness. I saw Colonel Saponyaki, the Prince's chief aide-de-camp, and Captain Hadjipetros, his second aide-de-camp, both of whom received me with characteristic Greek politeness. His Highness, they said, was too busy at the moment to receive visitors, but they suavely promised to assist me in whatever way they could in my mission. I asked for a signed and sealed general permission to attach myself to the Greek army, as was the custom to grant to accredited correspondents in other campaigns of which I

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had had experience. I was assured that such a document could not be granted because war had not been declared, but that if I wished to visit any particular post of the Greek army I would receive, on application specifying the post, a note of introduction to the commander. I availed myself of this offer on a later occasion.

It may be as well to state here that, even after the declaration of war, no general correspondent-pass was issued from head-quarters. For my own protection, I obtained a permit indorsed on the back of a photograph, which I had had taken at Larissa, by the Chief of the Staff, and this was of occasional use to me as a means of identification when angry and jealous suspicions were aroused in relation to my personal appearance, that I was a German.

Germans were black beasts to the Greek soldiery throughout the campaign, and were even more cordially disliked—hated if you will—than the Turks themselves. This of course arose from the reports that the Turkish army was really being directed by German generals, that the Turkish plan of campaign had been prepared by Germans, and that throughout the whole difficulty in the south-east of Europe the German Kaiser had been hostile to Greece and Greek aspirations.

The head-quarter staff was of very little assist-

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THE CROWN PRINCE OF GREECE

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ance indeed to correspondents throughout the campaign. They never had any information to communicate; at least they gave none. Occasionally they desired some from the correspondents. I do not know whether there was a regular intelligence department in connection with the head-quarter staff, but it happened more than once that correspondents knew of the movements of the enemy of which the staff were in ignorance. Correspondents were left to their own initiative as to where they should go. No restriction was placed on their movements, or indeed on those of the thousand and one nondescript people who follow, or hang on the skirts of an army. There were no field-police, and no precautions taken to prevent spies of every degree from noting the manœuvres of the Greek army, and its numbers and disposition at every point on the frontier, both before the declaration of war and after the commencement of hostilities.

From the Prince's head-quarters I proceeded at once to the citadel, from which a magnificent view of the frontier line of mountains, extending for twenty or thirty miles, could be obtained in the beautifully clear atmosphere—the Maluna Pass, on which all eyes were dirceted; the Mount Elias Pass, the Bougassie Pass, the entrance to the Kalamaki defile, and, away in the distance to the

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west, the entrance to Ravenni. On the citadel itself a commencement had been made with the erection of two batteries—one of four guns and another of two. The position was well chosen, and the engineers in charge deserve praise for the manner in which the works, with their connecting lines and covered ways, were constructed. The guns mounted were of 15-centimetre calibre, and they commanded for many miles the plain between Bougassie and Maluna, and the roads leading therefrom towards Larissa. On the plain itself, a commencement had been made a few miles in front of Larissa with a battery for six guns, and connecting trenches which commanded the Kazaklar road, and with another battery on the west for two 15-centimetre guns to command the Trikkala road and the mouth of the Kalamaki defile. But it must have occurred to the veriest tyro that these preparations for a possible defensive campaign were somewhat belated, if, as everybody, the Greeks themselves included, believed, a declaration of war were imminent.

From the citadel I made my way across the bridge spanning the Peneios, to the spacious parade-ground where the troops were at drill. And here I may sum up the impression derived from a close inspection of the men at Athens, at Volo, and at Larissa. So far as the rank and file were con-

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cerned, the physique was excellent. As men, they would compare well with the soldiers of any other nation of Europe. I scarcely saw one that we in Britain would call under-sized—the vast majority being five feet eight and over. In fact, other things being equal, they formed the very best material for a fighting machine. But even those of the Infantry of the Line who had been longest with the colours, wanted setting up. Their drill was loose, and their bearing could scarcely be called soldierly or smart. It was evident that the reservists had practically lost knowledge of their former drill, and the recruits formed very awkward squads indeed. One could not watch them long without being impressed with the general intelligence of all, and that they were anxious to do their duty so far as it accorded with their notions of discipline. And here was the weak spot in the whole Greek army. There was no real sense of strict military discipline. The drill was left mainly to the non-commissioned officers, and the officers were not, at drill, in sufficiently close contact with the men. There was no habit of implicit obedience to orders, and I have actually seen an officer approach a private and implore him as a favour to do what he had been told by his non-commissioned drill-instructor. On another occasion, when a smart shower of rain came on during drill,

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a battalion simply melted away to seek the shelter of the nearest trees. One trained in British methods, much more one cognizant of the stern discipline of the German army, must have been shocked at the free-and-easy familiarity between officers and privates, as well on as off duty.

On the street and in the cafés, privates mixed on a footing of perfect equality with their superior officers, and debated with freedom military subjects. The intense democratic feeling throughout Greece was sometimes made the excuse for the admittedly loose discipline and for the familiarity subsisting between officers and men. But the experience of the United States and of the British Colonies, where the democratic feeling is as strong and deep-rooted as it is in Greece, shows that strict military discipline and unquestioning subservience to orders are consistent with a sentiment of equality in civil life.

Another weakness of the Greek army was the acceptance of the services of untrained Irregulars and Volunteers, men who had either been endowed by the Government with a rifle and a few hundred cartridges or had acquired these for themselves. It cannot be denied that there was something noble in the inspiration which impelled these men to leave hearth and home and join the regular army in what they believed at heart to be a holy and

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patriotic crusade. But an undisciplined host, animated by however grand enthusiasm, must melt like snow before the sun in face of far inferior numbers who are trained to arms and to unquestioned obedience to their superior officers.

The best drilled and disciplined troops in the Greek army were the Evzones, of which there were nine battalions. They are men of the mountains, dressed in the picturesque kilt of plaited linen—the headgear being a scarlet fez, with long black silken tassel. They were, without exception, of splendid physique, and their free swinging carriage on the march was admirable. Knowing not what fear is, they were always placed in the forefront of battle, and they never belied their reputation for sustained bravery.

The Greek artillery was good. Officers and men had been thoroughly instructed, and it was the best arm of the service. The horsing of the guns was however bad, big and little animals being mixed in the same team. This of course militated against ease and precision of manœuvre in action.

There were, nominally, five squadrons of cavalry in the army. The majority of their mounts were Hungarian horses, imported a few days before the declaration of war. At best, it could not be said that they were more than raw mounted-infantry, or scouts.

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Of the Foreign Legion, it may be said that the rank and file were mostly a rough lot, and that the small English division were infinitely better than soaked weeds. Though the Legion had few opportunities of drill, they proved themselves brave men and true, and shared the best honours of the campaign.

Although, after the first introduction, I had no official communication with the Quartier-General, I made the acquaintance of several members of the staff—officers of great spirit and intelligence. Naturally, the war was a never-ending subject of conversation. It was amazing to find that the bare possibility of an invasion of Thessaly by the Turkish army had never entered into their thoughts. So it was with every one with whom I talked, from the moment of my arrival in Greece to the fatal day when a Moslem horde once more obtained a secure footing on Thessalian soil. It was no use reasoning with men in this frame of mind. When asked my honest opinion, I have pointed out that Turkey was a nation of twenty-eight millions, and that the population of Greece was little more than two and a half millions; that the Turks had an army organized by the most skilful generals of the German army; that it was thoroughly disciplined and equipped with the most modern weapons; that its fighting powers were

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second to none in the world when their fanaticism was aroused, and that, if need be, the Sultan could put half a million of troops into the field. How then could little Greece withstand, in a desperate struggle, so numerous and so powerful an enemy? The only reply I received was a sorrowful "Oh, you are no friend of Greece!"

As every Greek civilian is a politician, firmly believing that he is quite fit to direct the destinies of his country as Prime Minister, so every Greek soldier is a strategist. Whether officer or private, he carried with him in his pocket a map of the frontier of Macedonia, which he would, on the slightest provocation, draw forth, spread on his knees, or on the ground, and discuss *his* plan of campaign. Naturally, therefore, one heard a great variety of schemes for the invasion of Macedonia. The Greek commanders must have had some plan of campaign, and what purported to be an outline of it was given me. I cannot guarantee its accuracy; I can only give it for what it is worth.

It was recognized that it would be impossible to try and force the Maluna Pass. That, it was admitted, was too strong, both by natural position and by the numerous works which the Turks for years had been constructing all round it. But it was necessary that Elassona, the key of the Turkish frontier, should be turned. This was to be

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done by an attack upon Damasi, which commanded the Ravenni and Bougassie passes. The Greek army would then march along the road which follows pretty much the line of the Xerias river, and so come upon Elassona on the left and rear. While this operation was being conducted, another brigade was to be despatched down the Vale of Tempe, cross the Peneios at Laspockori, and follow the coast road to Platamona, which was to be captured with the assistance of the Greek fleet destined to operate on the right flank of the invading force. The Greek army was then to continue its triumphant course to Skala, their left being held secure by the inaccessible fastnesses of Mount Olympus. At Skala, a road leads westwards round the northern base of Olympus to Petra, and thence to Elassona and Selfidze, which were the two great Turkish garrisons. This road was to be seized by a division of the Greeks, while the remainder of the invading army marched on and captured Salonica. *Voilà tout!*

It was a very pretty plan—on paper; but it would have necessitated, in the attempt even to carry it out, an army three or four times the strength of that which Greece was able to put into the field.

Meantime, while waiting the development of events, I spent a few days in an inspection of the frontier. First of all, I meant to see for myself

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the far-famed and much-talked of Maluna Pass. The road from Larissa to Tyrnavos is good. It had been put into a thorough state of repair. Where it had formerly been marshy it had been embanked, and the bridges either strengthened or rebuilt. On the plain between the Tyrnavos road and the road to Kazaklar, a battery was in the course of construction, with embrasures for six guns, and at several points on the road there were flanking intrenchments or rifle-pits. The Xerias is crossed at Tyrnavos by a long trestled bridge. This was being strengthened, and traffic in the meantime was directed through the dry bed of the river. Just beyond Tyrnavos, a road strikes off to the left up into the mountains, passing the Monastery of the Prophet Elias. This road leads over what is known as the Elias Pass, and leads directly to the mountain village of Kurtziovali, from which a path leads down into the Vale of Elassona. The road up the pass from Tyrnavos had been admirably graded quite recently, and one could see that recent repairs had in view the passage of heavy traffic such as guns. About two and a half miles north-east of Tyrnavos, the road skirts round a white marble ridge called Kritiri, which springs at right angles from the main range of mountain and juts its white shoulders on to the plain. From this ridge I afterwards watched for

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several days the struggle by the Turks to obtain a footing on the plain of Thessaly. A mile and a half further on, the road skirts another but lower ridge, and then we are in view of Mati, which really means "fountain." Springs of the most beautiful clear cold water spurt out of the ground and are gathered in a basin, which in ancient times had evidently formed a bathing establishment. On rising ground in the immediate neighbourhood of Mati, a considerable number of troops were encamped, and hundreds were employed in re-making and straightening the road. From Mati the real ascent of the Maluna Pass begins, although it is nominally not supposed to do so until the village of Ligaria is reached. At this village there was a considerable detachment of both Evzones and Regular Infantry.

I presented a letter of recommendation furnished me by the Crown Prince's chief aide-de-camp to the Colonel in command. Quite a score of officers gathered round as we sat in the shade of the verandah of a small coffee-house, and all were eager to hear the latest news from Larissa, and as to when war was really to commence. A hospitable cup of coffee having been discussed, the Colonel placed at my disposal a guard of half-a-dozen Evzones, and a doctor and a captain kindly volunteered to accompany me to the top

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of the pass. This portion of the trip was made on foot, and we followed the old mule-track as being the shortest way. But during the previous three weeks several hundred men had been employed in constructing an entirely new road right up the pass, broad enough for a couple of carriages, and graded so beautifully and so easily that the ascent could be made with even the heaviest vehicles. One of the officers, pointing with pride to this really fine piece of engineering work, said, with evident conviction, that the road had been made to enable the Greeks the more easily to convey guns, ammunition, and supplies for their army when the invasion of Macedonia had been accomplished. I turned to a companion, not a Greek, and said to him in English, "How beautifully easy they are making the invasion of Thessaly for the Turk." There could be no doubt that it would have been a very difficult matter indeed to have brought field-guns down the old mule-track. In the defiles on either side there was a good deal of brushwood, principally of the wild olive and the wild fig. The solitude of the mountain-side was broken with the almost continuous calls of scores of cuckoos. In an hour the crest of the pass was reached, and we were received at the Greek blockhouse by the captain and lieutenant in command of the small detachment

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of Evzones which formed the garrison. One of these Evzones had been out on the mountain-side hunting early that morning, and had shot with his rifle half-a-dozen partridges, which our hosts offered to prepare for us after our climb. We had previously, however, had lunch, and gratefully declined the proffered hospitality.

The view looking towards the plain is magnificent, and the whole country in the transparent atmosphere as far as, and even beyond, Larissa could be studied in the clearest detail. It was evident that no large movement of troops could take place there without its being plainly revealed to the Turks. Directly to the west of the Greek block-house rose a peak two or three hundred feet higher than the crest of the pass, and on this peak was the redan of Menexes. With my glasses I could see that it was mounted with at least four large guns. A ridge, with not too steep a slope, connects Menexes and a series of low hills to the east of the Elassona valley. On the shoulder of one of these hills is the village of Caricani, protected by heavy earthworks. Following this ridge with my field-glasses, I could see that it was at many points strongly fortified.

I was very anxious to get a peep at Elassona, but it was impossible to do so from any point of Greek territory. One of the Greek officers of the

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blockhouse offered to accompany me to the Turkish blockhouse and interview the Turkish commander. A white handkerchief was hoisted on a riding whip, and we advanced to the boundary-line. Here the Turkish sentry challenged, and my guide, who had some knowledge of Turkish, called for the commanding officer. By and by he appeared, and advanced to the line and exchanged salutes with us. He was a big fellow, at least 6 ft. 2 in. in height, with a peaked nose, gleaming eyes, and rather a sinister expression. His uniform was in tatters, and altogether he did not present a pleasing appearance. With a certain soldierly courtesy, however, he accepted the cigarettes we offered him, and I thought somewhat reluctantly granted me permission to ascend a small hill to the west of the roadway, from which he said I might obtain a view of Elassona.

The town of Elassona is picturesquely situated on the north-east corner of a cup-shaped valley in the very heart of the Kassia range. The valley is perhaps six or seven miles in diameter, and looks fertile, and contains three other villages. At different points towards the west side were low hills which had been converted into redoubts. Reports of correspondents with the Turkish army had stated that there were 35,000 troops in position in this valley; but although I scanned

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carefully with my glasses the whole of it, I could only pick out three squadrons of cavalry, three batteries of artillery, and a few battalions of infantry, which were manœuvring down on the open ground. This seemed to indicate that the Turkish forces in the neighbourhood of Elassona had either been withdrawn behind the ridge which I have already described, for the purposes of concealment, or had been moved westward to some other point of the frontier. Descending the hill to join my companions at the Greek blockhouse, I noticed that half a squadron of cavalry had arrived at the Turkish blockhouse. They, in all probability, formed the escort of some general who had come to make an inspection of the position, or to make the final arrangements for the attack on the Greek position, which was actually made on the following day.

So far as my study of the position was concerned, I quite agreed with the Greek officer, with whom I had discussed the matter, that the Turkish position, from Menexes round the whole valley of Elassona, was infinitely too strong to be assaulted by any Greek force that could be brought to bear upon it, unless with an extraordinary loss of life. As we bade a cordial adieu to the Greek officers at the blockhouse, one of them smilingly remarked that perhaps some dark night they might surprise

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Menexes, but this I took to be mere badinage. The return to Larissa was accomplished without incident.

On another occasion I paid a visit to Ravenni, from which pass the assault on Damasi was to be directed, and which was to be the prelude of the flanking movement on Elassona on the left. Although the latest guide-books stated that the road from Larissa to Trikkala was a mere mule-track, I found it a fine military road, deeply metalled and capable of bearing the heaviest traffic. Ten or eleven miles from Larissa is the village of Kuzochiros, immediately beyond which the Peneios had been spanned by a high-level trestled bridge, which however had been carried away by the floods of the previous winter. A military pontoon-bridge had been thrown across the river, and approaches to it cut deep into the banks. Crossing this bridge, a sharp turn to the right led into the pass through which the Peneios flowed. It proved more an open valley than a pass, and at two points earthworks had been thrown up. They were incomplete, but apparently designed for defensive purposes. About three miles from Kuzochiros, the valley opens up till it reaches from one and a half to two miles wide, with folds of considerable hills on its eastern and western sides. At its northern end is a high hill called Vigla, in

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Turkish territory, where the pass to Damasi really begins. This hill had been fortified by the Turks with a battery on its southern slope, and another facing the west in the direction of the valley of Bougassie, which will afterwards be referred to.

A considerable number of Greek troops were camped in the folds of the hills on the west side of the valley, and batteries had been constructed on the low flat ground and on the eastern slope, but as yet no guns had been placed in position. At the southern end of this valley, the Peneios takes a sharp turn to the east and cuts its way through a deep and narrow gorge called the Kalamaki defile. At the western entrance to the defile, hidden from Vigla by a ridge of mountains, was the small village of Ravenni, and here two or three thousand troops were located. Mountains of grey limestone rise precipitously on either side from the river-bed, and there was a solemn grandeur about the barren, gloomy ravine. A road had been cut on the face of the cliff on the northern shore, and made passable for both troops and guns. At the eastern end of the defile, the road forks on the plain, one branch leading to the mouth of the Bougassie Pass, and the other across the flat ground to the bridge across the Peneios at Larissa. The preparations here made seemed to point to the accuracy of the plan of invasion which had

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been outlined to me. But nothing had been done either here or at the entrance to the Bougassie Pass to prevent an inroad of the Turks into Thessaly. It was not indeed until several days after the declaration of war that a spade was turned in the hasty formation of imperfect earthworks.

I also visited the Vale of Tempe, in order to see what was being done on that side of the frontier. The drive across the plain was uninteresting except for this fact, that the ground was found to be rolling instead of perfectly flat, and that within a very few miles of Larissa there were small ridges as high as, or even higher than, the top of the citadel at Larissa, and which completely commanded it. An enemy debouching from the Vale of Tempe, and getting possession of these ridges, might therefore render Larissa untenable.

The western gate to the Vale of Tempe is the northern shoulder of a spur which shoots out from the giant mass of Ossa, and I turned aside to have a look at the ancient quarries of Casambala on the face of this spur. The quarries are intensely interesting, as in them alone is to be found the most beautiful of all marbles, known as "Verde Antico." They were worked, it is believed, nearly two thousand years ago, and from this spot was taken the great monolithic columns which adorn

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San Sofia in Constantinople, and which decorated many of the classic temples of Rome. The climb up to the workings is stiff, and one wonders how the great blocks were transported down into the plain. It is extremely interesting to note the marvellous chiselling on the face of the rock where the enormous pillars were hewn from the face. At one spot a huge block, evidently intended for a sarcophagus, has been all but completely hewn out.

However efficient ancient methods of quarrying may have been, it can be seen how wasteful they were. Superstition has grown round this block, and I was informed by the intelligent director of the quarry that at certain seasons of the year the peasantry from far and near in the plain make a pilgrimage to it and adorn it with flowers. The fête is a curious survival of pagan rite. Memory of the exact site of these quarries had been lost, and they were only re-discovered a few years ago by an English geologist and archæologist named Brindley. The property has been acquired by an English company, and the dozen or so men at work were employed in cutting out large blocks meant to be dressed into pillars for the new Roman Catholic Cathedral at Kensington. I saw two of these blocks, each weighing about twenty tons, that had been carried down the steep face of the hill on rollers, and were waiting transport to

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the railway for conveyance to Volo and thence to London.

A couple of miles from these quarries I came upon a Wallach village. There are a large number of nomad Wallachians in Thessaly, especially among the foot-hills. They are employed as shepherds. Their houses are nothing better than beehive straw huts. I had halted by the side of a clear stream which bubbled from the rock at a somewhat high temperature, but which after cooling in a basin below the fountain was deliciously sweet water. The head of the village came up, and with the genuine hospitable feeling of primitive people invited me to share his mid-day meal. I entered his hut, which was deliciously cool and shady after the glare of the marble mountain-side. Here is the menu: Roast lamb's entrails wound round a wand; stewed lamb; lamb's fat; curd; a glass of oozoo; a cut from a whole roast lamb; an omelette made from maize-flour and sheep's-milk cheese. Each course was accompanied by a very passable red wine *à discrétion.*

This interesting entertainment over, we made our way right down through the Vale of Tempe, said by enthusiasts to be the most beautiful valley in the world. The western and open end of the valley is pretty, and cultivated like a garden. The defile itself is striking. In some parts it is even

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grand, with cliffs hundreds of feet high hemming in the river, which flows with a swift and turbid current. On lofty peaks on either side are the ruins of ancient fortresses, and through breaks here and there in the precipitous walls a gleam of the snowy heights of Olympus and Ossa is caught. The most striking part of the valley is where it opens out towards the sea, and where the banks of the river are clothed with plane-trees of truly giant proportions, poplars, laurels, etc. It was with laurel cut in the Vale of Tempe that the victors in the Pythian games were crowned. It is *not* the most beautiful valley in the world. There are many quite as beautiful and striking in various parts of Europe, including our own isles; but what renders it interesting are its historical associations, one only of which I need mention (for I am not writing a guide-book), namely, that it was down this ravine that Pompey escaped to the sea after his celebrated defeat by Cæsar at Pharsala.

It was evident that there was something unusual on foot in the valley. Gangs of men were employed in repairing and levelling the road and in rebuilding broken culverts. Opposite the village of Dereli, a commencement had been made with the construction of a very substantial bridge. Guards of soldiers were stationed at short intervals all along the valley to the sea. Plainly there

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was something in the reported Greek plan of campaign.

Darkness overtook us before our inspection was fairly over, and we returned to the village of Baba, where we literally camped on the floor of a café kept by a venerable Greek, who bore a ludicrously striking resemblance to the busts of Socrates. If only half of the fleas that were on the floor had been unanimous they might have dragged us into the river. Astir betimes in the morning, it was my intention to visit Nezeros and Rapsani up in the mountains in the line on the frontier, but while waiting for mules, on which alone the passage of the mountain to Nezeros could be accomplished, I heard the boom of a gun coming seemingly from the direction of the Maluna Pass. Was that, I asked myself, the signal for the commencement of war? Nezeros and Rapsani were forgotten, and I returned post-haste to Larissa.

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CHAPTER IV

THE RAID INTO MACEDONIA

THE very day of my arrival at Larissa I put myself in communication with a prominent member of the Ethniké Etairia, to whom I had a note of introduction. He promised to give me a hint as to any movement of an insurrectionary character in Macedonia. There were then at Larissa a large number of Macedonian refugees who had been implicated in several of the abortive risings in that province last summer. It was openly canvassed that these were prepared to make a rush across the frontier, assisted by a band organized by the National Society. It would be idle now to inquire whether the Greek Government was aware of the preparations being made for a raid or series of raids by irresponsible Irregulars, or by bands organized and equipped by the Ethniké Etairia. But, if they were not so aware, they must have closed their ears to blatant rumour.

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THE RAID INTO MACEDONIA: SOME OF THE INSURGENT LEADERS: CAPTAIN LAZOS AND THREE LIEUTENANTS

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The moment I reached Larissa from the Vale of Tempe, in the afternoon of Saturday, April 10, my Nationalist friend informed me that the raid was an accomplished fact, and he volunteered to accompany me to Trikkala, where authentic information regarding it might be obtained. Within half-an-hour I had hired a carriage and was *en route*. The road was the same I had traversed on my visit to Ravenni until the Peneios was crossed at Kuzochiros. Between that point and Zarkos I found the Greek troops all in readiness for active work. They were elated and excited at a prospect of the commencement of hostilities. The road all the way to Trikkala was in the most admirable order, and we reached the last-named town half-an-hour after midnight. The division of the army on this part of the frontier was under the command of Colonel Mavromichaelis, and it was evident on the outskirts of the town itself that he was something of a disciplinarian. At any rate, there was something like military law in Trikkala. One might wander about Larissa at any hour of the day or night without a single interrogatory from patrol or sentry. Here we were immediately challenged by a sentry, and had to give explanations and show papers before we were permitted to enter the town. The same thing happened at every other street. At last we reached a spacious

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café, which was still fully occupied, although Sunday morning was an hour old. Every one was full of the raid, and of what they conceived to be its pronounced success.

It was not my intention to join the raiders, as more important operations were likely to ensue elsewhere, but simply to glean information from reliable sources as to what had actually taken place. I now piece together a brief sketch of the history of the raid, gathered during the next few days.

The raiders numbered about 3000, including a company of Italian volunteers, headed by Signor Cipriani, a revolutionist of European fame. The force was under the command of three ex-Greek officers named Melanos, Capsalolpulis, and Hapzitros; and by Macedonian chiefs named Zermos, Davelis, Sarandis, and Vrakas—the latter all well-known revolutionaries, or, as the Turkish authorities would call them, brigands, who had spent half their life in guerilla warfare in the mountains of Macedonia.

The rendezvous was at Koniskos, a village on the frontier to the north-east of Kalabaka, secluded enough to be hidden from the observation of both the Greek and Turkish authorities. All the men were well-armed, and dressed in the national costume, with caps bearing the badge of the National League, the letters "E. E." (Ethniké Etairia) em-

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broidered in blue and white, and a cross with the words, "*En Touto Nika*" ("By this Conquer"). Accompanying the invaders was a monk from Mount Athos, who was constituted standard-bearer; and amongst the other volunteers were an abbot and two deacons.

On Thursday afternoon, April 8, a religious service was held at Koniskos, at which all the men engaged in the enterprise partook of the Sacrament, and had administered to them by the religious leaders the oath of "liberty or death." At two o'clock in the morning this insurgent force left Koniskos, and marched along mountain paths to an angle where the frontier takes a stiff bend southwards so as to embrace Epirus in Turkish territory. At a village called Tchourka the force was divided into three columns, which crossed the frontier respectively at Dendro, Phonika, and Perlianzia, and attacked the Turkish blockhouses opposite, blowing them up with dynamite, and capturing eight prisoners, who were sent back to Kalabaka.

The Greek regular troops were very nearly drawn into the fray. The commander of the Greek post called Prophet Elias (there are numberless villages and hills of this name throughout the whole of Macedonia and Thessaly), hearing firing in the mountain, left his station to see what was going

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on. A Turkish post fired upon him, and he was wounded. The incident led to a brisk fusillade between his post and the Turkish opposite, but the firing ceased in a few minutes.

The principal column marched against Baltino, which was garrisoned by two companies of Turkish Nazims. The Nazims extended in front of the village, and poured several volleys upon the advancing raiders, but seeing their superior number, the Turks withdrew into the village. They barricaded themselves in their barracks and an adjoining house and church, which were afterwards surrounded by the insurgents. There was desultory firing all day between the Turks and the raiders, and the Nazims were compelled to withdraw from the church and house which they occupied, and to concentrate themselves in the barracks. Captain Melanos refused to allow the insurgents to storm the position, as he did not wish to incur too great a loss of life. He thought it best to starve the Turks into submission. Three times during the following night the small Turkish garrison attempted to fight their way through the insurgents' line, but were driven back with a loss of two or three killed. The remainder surrendered on Saturday evening.

The insurgent chiefs issued a proclamation, calling upon the Macedonians and Epirotes to rise *en*

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massé to fight for freedom and their country. But there was no response to this fervid appeal. At Baltino and other villages subsequently visited, the inhabitants shut themselves up in their houses as a rule, and very few joined the insurgents, although it was alleged that the leaders had taken with them money to the amount of £3000 sterling in gold for the purpose of distribution.

Davelis with a strong column marched on the Sunday to the left, to the village of Krania, where he posted himself among the high broken ground. A battalion of Nazims from Velemisti attacked Davelis, but was unable to dislodge him from among the rocks, and the insurgents in turn took the offensive, driving the Turks back towards Grevena, and capturing eighteen mules with provisions and ammunition, and fifteen prisoners. Davelis followed up his advantage by advancing to Kipurio, which he captured; and thence to Pigaditza, where there is a bridge over the mountain torrent of Stere, and which was considered an important post from a strategic point of view. From this point Davelis despatched a band composed of Greeks and Italians, under the command of Cipriani, to the village of Zalovon, which was taken possession of by the insurgents. Another column was sent to the right, invested Sitovo, and ultimately took it with a loss of seven Turks killed and five prisoners.

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After blowing up the blockhouse, the insurgents advanced successively on Kritades, Plisia, and Kourdaszi, the latter commanding the right approach to Grevena, which was the objective of the raiders. A severe fight took place at Kritades, which was defended by about 400 Turks; and both sides fought with great determination. Captain Melanos, the principal leader of the insurgents, was wounded, and the command fell on the chiefs Zermos and Lazzo. Kritades was finally taken by the insurgents, who captured 150 rifles, a store of ammunition, and twenty-five prisoners. The Turkish killed numbered eighty. Amongst the killed on the insurgents' side were five Macedonian chiefs, including the notorious Gerbas.

This was the last of the insurgents' successes, and up to this point the raid had been conducted with considerable tactical skill. They had cut to some extent communication between Macedonia and Epirus, and had they been joined by the inhabitants in numbers, as it had been hoped they would, they might have been able to push on to Grevena, since for two or three days they had command of all roads leading to that important centre. But not only were they disappointed in the refusal of the natives to join them, reinforcements of insurgents from Thessaly failed to arrive. The weather moreover was bitterly cold, and snow fell on the mountains. Harassing guerilla fighting,

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with every possible discomfort in the world and no glory, was not to the stomach of the Italian volunteers, and a large majority of them retired from the scene, and crossed the frontier in disgust.

Edhem Pasha sent an overwhelming force from Diskata on the right, and from Macovon on the left; the latter with a battery of mountain-guns. The two Turkish columns, together with a force from Grevena, practically hemmed in the insurgents on all their positions. There was one stiff fight between about 500 insurgents entrenched in the neighbourhood of Krania, but the spirit of the latter was broken, and they withdrew in small parties up into the mountain recesses. The whole raiding force then practically melted away, and the remnant, including Davelis and Cipriani, escaped across the frontier.

Simultaneously with the raid from Koniskos in the direction of Baltino, a band left Nezeros, on the eastern frontier, under a chief named Sinsinikos. They marched on Karya, but they encountered a large Turkish force, which speedily scattered them, and they sought refuge in the recesses of Mount Olympus. There was a gun fired on this raiding band which I heard in the Vale of Tempe, and which induced me forthwith to return to Larissa.

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CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF NEZEROS

WHEN the news of the raid into Macedonia above Kalabaka was received at headquarters at Larissa, it was feared that it might immediately lead to a declaration of war by the Porte, and the troops of the garrison stood to arms till late in the afternoon of Saturday, the 10th of April, ready to be despatched to any point on the frontier. The Crown Prince, it was said, had telegraphed to every Greek post along the line, on no account to take the offensive, and the excitement, which was intense for a couple of days, gradually cooled down. Although the Macedonian raid was the immediate cause of the declaration of war by the Sultan, the signal was not given by Edhem Pasha to begin operations for a week afterwards.

Early on Saturday morning, the 17th of April, word was received that the Turks had taken the

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offensive at Nezeros, and in less than half-an-hour I was making my way at speed for the Vale of Tempe, from which Nezeros could be best approached. At Baba I hired a mule for the purpose of crossing the mountain to Nezeros, the ascent to the top of the pass being about 4000 feet. The Peneios was in flood, and we had to reach the northern shore by the means of a flat ferry-boat. The country between here and the village of Dereli is a series of ridges, beautifully wooded, on one of which stands the ruins of the classic and mediæval fortress of Gonnos, which commanded the entrance to the defile. Dereli itself is situated in a beautiful cup-valley, its narrow streets, Turkish in character, being relieved now and again by open spaces shaded with splendid plane-trees. These were crowded with the townspeople, both male and female, anxious as to the course of events, and curious as to the object of our journey up the mountain. Already an ambulance had brought down several wounded Evzones, and the news was that the Turks had been defeated. Out of this cup the pass leads up to a succession of terraces, cut by mountain torrents into razor-backed ridges, and the bare grey rock baked the air to a furnace-heat.

The climb up the path was both wearisome and difficult. In places it was no more than six or

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eight inches wide at the bottom, although opening to three or four feet, two feet up between walls of broken conglomerate. Two-thirds of the way up the mountain there were 250 Evzones. They had been despatched from Larissa at one o'clock in the morning to reinforce the Nezeros garrison. From a distance, as they climbed up these grey rocky steeps with their tasselled fezes, they looked like so many red-headed ants creeping from boulder to boulder. When we reached them a halt had been called, and they were enjoying, scattered all over the broken ground, a brief rest. Deservedly so, because they had covered a distance of forty miles in fourteen hours, including the five hours' ascent through the pass, and each of them besides his kit and rifle carried 150 cartridges. As we neared the top an orderly passed at marvellous speed on his sure-footed pony, with a message to Dereli for an ambulance to bear down the wounded.

The crest of the pass being negotiated, a brief rest was taken, as well for the benefit of our mules as for the opportunity to enjoy one of the most marvellous panoramas of mountainous scenery I have witnessed. On every side was seen to rise out of the blue billow after billow of mountain ranges, diversified by serried peaks. In the transparent atmosphere of a cold dry day, it almost seemed as if you could throw a stone to the summit of the

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cone of Ossa. On the left, with many ranges between, was the broken outline of the Kassia range; and there, to our astonishment, we could see the puffs of white smoke in the indentation of the Maluna Pass, with, a long interval afterwards, the muffled sound of a gun. Down at our feet was a pretty valley, and at its further end the shimmering waters of a lake, low hills rising precipitously from its northern shore. Beyond these was the solid mass of Mount Olympus, with its dazzling drapery of eternal snow.

Long before surmounting the crest, we had heard the dull roar of guns reverberating through the mountains. At last a view of Nezeros was obtained. The smoke of a battery in full play on the further hills could be seen curling and eddying against the deep blue sky, and across the valley too came the sharp rattle of rifle-fire, echoed from point to point of the broken range.

Pushing ahead, we arrived just in time to witness the closing scenes of the day's fighting. The operations at this point of the frontier were begun by an attempt on the part of the Turkish regular troops to occupy a portion of territory south of the village of Analypsis. The territory consists of a range of low hills rising precipitously from Lake Nezeros, and separated from the bold shoulders of Olympus by a deep ravine, which expands in

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places into a broad valley. The village of Nezeros lies on the north-eastern shore of the lake, and creeps lazily up the lower slopes of the eastern end of the minor range. The highest point in that range is called Mount Annunciation. The Greeks have always claimed the territory as being within their boundary, although its possession has frequently been disputed by the Turks under the decision of the Boundary Commission in 1881.

At nine o'clock on the Friday night the Greek Evzone sentinels observed a body of Turkish regulars from Analypsis marching on Annunciation Hill. On their challenging the Turks, the latter fired upon them. The Evzones, one of which was wounded, returned the fire and drove the Turks back across the frontier, taking five prisoners. Their blood was up, and the Evzones, following up their success, made a rush for neighbouring Turkish blockhouses, five of which they captured between Nezeros and Rapsani. At one of these, named Kotroni, an Evzone tore off his fustanella, steeped it in a can of petroleum, which he found in a corner, and thus set fire to the station.

The Turkish attack was so unexpected that Colonel Louros, who was in command of the frontier line from Godaman to the sea, was absent at Larissa. He, however, started for his command

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at eight o'clock on the night of the attack, and reached Nezeros by the morning. Word was sent to Dereli, and at four o'clock four mountain-guns were despatched thence up the pass on mule-back, under Captain Pierris, reaching Nezeros at ten o'clock on Saturday morning. Meanwhile, at day-break, the Turkish infantry renewed their attempt to scale Mount Annunciation, advancing at first in small detachments of eighty men, but they were successfully held in check by the Evzones, and driven back on Marcasi, a small hill-station on the east flank of Mount Annunciation, where they entrenched themselves.

Immediately on the arrival of the mountain-guns, two were dragged up from the lake-side to the crest of Mount Annunciation, partly by the aid of mules and partly by the strong arms of the gunners themselves. A battery was at once formed on a small plateau overlooking the defile towards Analypsis, in the direction of Marcasi, and fire was at once opened on the enemy.

This was the signal for a new movement by the Turks. A strong force debouched from a wood on the top of Marcasi Hill, and forming into column, intrepidly advanced upon the Greek position. A withering fire was poured upon them by the Evzones, who lined the face of Mount Annunciation. Two shells from the battery above

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exploded in the midst of the Turkish column, making great havoc. The column broke, and the enemy retired once more under the shelter of the wood.

In the course of the day, six successive attempts were made by the Turks in different formations to storm the hill, but the Evzones, well protected in their extemporized intrenchments, and supported by a well-directed fire from the mountain battery, drove them back every time.

At nightfall there was a cessation of hostilities, the result of the engagement being that the Greeks held their position. They lost eight killed and twenty wounded, and took one Turkish prisoner, who in one of the charges simply would not retire along with his fellows.

In accordance with instructions received from the Crown Prince, the Greeks never took the offensive, but in the course of the day several Turkish positions, including Aramatoulik and Rapsanostrata, Saint Anasthasia and Perdika, were bombarded, a shell exploding in the last-named blockhouse, partially demolishing walls and roof. When darkness set in, the drooping fire of infantry on either side ceased. Sentinels were posted at every prominent point, and the remainder of the troops, after a meal sent up to them from the village, slept in their intrenchments or in the lee

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of boulders in the immediate neighbourhood of the battery on the crest of the mountain.

I made my way down to the village of Nezeros, and joined several Greek officers, one of whom was slightly wounded, in a large low-ceiled, mud-walled and mud-floored building, which constituted the village café. It was cavernous in the gloomy dark night, and lit by only one slush-lamp. Fortunately I had brought with me from Baba some cold lamb and a few tins of preserved meat, otherwise nothing in the shape of food was to be found in the village, which had become denuded of its inhabitants. The café-keeper, from some mysterious store, produced some resinous wine, and on the whole we did not fare badly, the Greek officers sharing our meal gladly, as they had had nothing to eat since the previous evening except a piece of army bread.

While we were enjoying our repast, the door of the room opened, and in streamed a company of Evzones, who, without ceremony, took possession of the whole place, throwing themselves down on the floor when they could not get possession of a block of wood as a stool. From their haversacks they produced bread and goat-milk cheese, a few with the added luxury of an onion, and they made their supper with good appetite, laughing and joking the while. These were a portion of the

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Evzone reinforcements which we had passed early in the afternoon on the steeps of the pass of Dereli. It never seemed to occur to the officers that there was anything out of the way in these soldiers taking cool possession of our quarters, and in even coming up to our rough deal table and inviting themselves to a participation in the fragments of our lamb, which we had carefully meant to reserve for the morrow. They called upon the café-keeper to make them coffee, with the air of a prince at least, and the café-keeper busied himself in doing exactly as he was commanded, although it took him a long time to satisfy all their wants. The scene was not without its romance, for we knew that these men had been marching for fourteen hours on end with cheerfulness, and that they were prepared, after an hour or two's sleep on the floor, to spend another fourteen hours in an equally cheerful popping at the Turks. The swagger of a mountaineer is always to be respected, even if not altogether admired.

It soon became evident that it would be impossible to spend the night in that room, and perforce we had to seek new quarters, since already the atmosphere was as thick as that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Lieutenant Wester, who had been my companion throughout the day, and I, accordingly sought out the quarters of Colonel

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Louros, and asked if he would kindly allot to us one of the empty houses in the village where we might put up for the night. An orderly was called, who, leading the way, introduced us up a rickety stair into a dimly-lit room, saluted, and took his departure. We looked round, and to our amazement found the greater part of the floor-space occupied by a man, his wife, her sister, three or four children, and six or seven soldiers; and a glance, even in the semi-gloom, was sufficient to show that one of the women and two of the children were suffering from fever. Lieutenant Wester and I looked into each other's eyes, and he smiled when I said, "Out of the frying-pan into the fire." Practically, no notice had been taken of our entrance, and there did not seem to be any at our departure.

Once more we sought Colonel Louros. He was standing on the verandah of the house which formed his head-quarters, with three of his aides-de-camp beside him, discussing, as we imagined, in the free-and-easy manner of the Greek, the events of the past day and the possibilities of the next. Whether that be so or not, he was courteously sorry that our allotted quarters were not to our mind; he would try and find others. Meantime, he opened a little bag which hung from his left wrist, took from it a cigarette paper and pinch of tobacco, leisurely made a whiff, and began to smoke it.

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Another orderly was called, and directions were given to him. He marched, we followed, bidding once more adieu to the good-natured colonel. This time we were led to a house which was really empty, except for an old copper boiler on the ground-floor, against which we stumbled in the dark as we groped for the wooden staircase to the upper regions, and which gave out a most melancholy sound on the now still midnight air. We reached, through an unhinged door, a bare apartment, with two windows void of glass. That was all that could be seen during the momentary flash of a match. Lieutenant Wester, my dragoman and myself chose a corner, lay down on the floor, and, weary as we were, tried hard to get some little measure of sleep.

The night was bitterly cold. The wind, which seemed to blow directly from the icy slope of Olympus, searched every corner of the room through the open windows. Fortunately I had my ulster with me, and as some measure of protection I buttoned it as closely as could be. My dragoman had only a waterproof, and when the wind sighed through the room his teeth chattered like the clattering sound of a stork's bill. The first discomfort I felt was from the want of a pillow or head-rest of some sort, and sleep was literally impossible. I could not help thinking of

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the poor fellows up in the trenches on Mount Annunciation, and of the wounded, who may not all have been picked up after the day's engagement. Cold as we were, we possessed at least some degree of animal heat, and found from the restless irritation of hundreds of stinging bites that we had become the unwilling hosts of myriads of blood-sucking parasites. A score of times I got up, walked to an open balcony, looked to the gloom of Mount Annunciation on the right, and to the leaden mirror of Lake Nezeros reflecting with a dull light the bright stars overhead. I hit upon the happy idea of using my field-glasses on end as a pillow. Narrow as the case was it served the purpose, and at last, despite the icy wind and the fond attention of our little friends, I slept!

Dawn was flushing a violet-red on the head of Olympus, and a blue-grey on Mount Annunciation when I awoke. The alarum was the sharp crack of rifles away to the left. A new day, and a new battle had come. My companions too had been roused by the sound, and as our toilet consisted of nothing but a shake to get rid of our guests, it was not prolonged. We made our way to the café, to discover that we were among the first to be astir in the village. The Evzones were still sound asleep on the mud floor, and we had to pick our steps gingerly to the end of the hovel where was the

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raised fire-place at which the coffee was made. It is astonishing how refreshing is a tiny cup of the thick, luscious black syrup, known as Turkish coffee, especially if accompanied with alternative sips of decently good water. By and by the Evzones were aroused, and being joined by others of their companions who had slept elsewhere, they fell in and marched with a swinging stride up the face of the hill, to reinforce the lines of troops which had spent the night in the open.

While we had slept, two more mountain-guns had been brought up from Dereli, and long before daylight Colonel Louros had been making his dispositions for the renewal of the engagement. During the night also, soldiers had been employed in making a zigzag path from the lake-side up the southern face of Annunciation Hill, which path was utilized for conveying the additional guns to the battery on the crest. Lieutenant Wester and myself followed this path, sometimes saving distance at the expense of additional effort, by cutting across the zigzag. The boom of the guns, and the swishing hum of bullets overhead, told us that the engagement had begun in earnest. When we reached the top and looked to the north-east, we could see that three battalions of Turkish infantry had debouched from Marcasi Hill and the adjoining wood. The first line occupied intrench-

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ments which had been dug during the night on the slope of the hill facing those occupied by the Evzones on the east face of Annunciation Hill. The second Turkish line took a position higher up the slope. The third battalion was held in reserve.

On the Greek side, the four-gun battery on the crest of Annunciation Hill was supported right and left by a company of Evzones, while the whole face of the hill, down almost to its base, was covered by Greek troops, some in extended order, some under cover of trenches or boulders. At first, the rifle-fire from both sides was slow, and but little damage was done, for both Greek and Turk were well under cover. At half-past five, however, a considerable number of Turks advanced from the wood, but no sooner did they make their appearance than the Evzones—in, as it were, terraced array—opened a withering fire upon them, and drove them back to the sheltering trees.

At six o'clock, the battery of mountain-guns sent a couple of shells over towards the Turkish position, and the range being found, successive shells seemed to do execution. The explosion of every well-directed missile was greeted with wild cheers by the Evzones in the neighbourhood of the battery. Then came a hot fusillade from the Turkish intrenched troops, and the hum of the bullets was like the sound of a field of wheat

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bending and swaying before an autumn wind. One of the coolest things I ever saw done on a battle-field was by Lieutenant Wester. He was anxious to obtain a photograph by means of his kodak of the engagement, and emerging from the comparative shelter of a piled-up heap of rocks from which we were watching the scene, he stepped out when the rain of bullets seemed to be thickest, to the very edge of the hill in front and to the side of the battery; focussed his machine, on three separate occasions, and obtained three separate pictures.

Again a Turkish force debouched from the wood on Marcasi, but again, so hot was the reception from the rifle-fire of the Evzones that they wavered. A shell from the battery at that moment exploded in one of the Turkish intrenchments, doing evidently considerable damage, and the troops in the open were once more withdrawn to the shelter of the wood. In the course of the day, two of the guns of the Greek battery were thrown out of action through the breaking of the trunnions, owing to the force of the recoil. These guns were withdrawn to the foot of the hill, and the two guns which had been held in reserve were dragged up to fill their place. For several hours there was simply an interchange of rifle-fire between the Greek and Turkish lines, with an occasional shell thrown in by the battery on the top of a hill.

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The Greek troops, which numbered in all about 1200, were, it was understood, under strict orders not to assume the offensive. It must be remembered that, as yet, war had not been declared. War, as a matter of fact, was not declared by the Sultan till the evening of that day, although it was some time after before we, with the Greek army, knew that hostilities had been officially proclaimed. No attempt was consequently made by Colonel Louros to capture the Turkish positions on Marcasi Hill. He contented himself with defending Greek territory.

Heavy firing was heard all the forenoon away to the left in the direction of Karya and Mount Godaman, and when I saw the first indication that the Turks on Marcasi Hill were retiring on their original positions at Analypsis, I made up my mind to return at once to Larissa, where it was easiest to find whether the Turkish attack had been made all along the frontier, and whether the war had at last commenced in downright earnest. Lieutenant Wester concurred, and off we set. As we skirted the east side of the lake we passed the villagers of Nezeros, fleeing to the mountains overlooking the Vale of Tempe; and the rear-guard, so to speak, consisted of the village pastor with a rifle slung over his shoulder. On our way down the precipitous pass to Dereli, we met reinforcements of

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Infantry, Artillery and a company of Engineers, with large trains of ammunition and trenching implements, making their slow way to the front. As soon as we cleared the difficulties of the pass, we hastened to Baba, where, in the café, our old friend Socrates provided us with decent and much-needed refreshment, ere starting on a sharp drive to Larissa, which was reached late on the Sunday afternoon.

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CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PASSES

LATE on Sunday evening, April 18, just as I was about to turn in after our long day at Nezeros, and the ride back to Larissa, I learned, from an officer who had returned from Maluna, that the Turkish assault had been made all along the line of the frontier.

The speed with which the news of disaster spreads is marvellous. It passes from mouth to mouth, from eye to eye. The air carries it as quickly as the electric flash of the telegraph or the mirrored gleam of the heliograph. It was whispered that the Greeks had met with serious reverses at Maluna Pass and on Mount Elias Pass; but to balance these they had been successful in the defence of Bougassie and Ravenni.

To begin with what were regarded as successes. The Turks from Damasi, and its front advanced

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works at Vigla, had made a simultaneous attack on the Greeks at the mouth of the Bougassie Pass, and on those posted in the Ravenni valley. In the former case the Greeks, who were under the command of Colonel Dimopoulo, fought with desperation, and drove back the Turks upon their lines. They then assumed the offensive, and ascending the hills on either side of the pass attacked the blockhouses of Sidero Poluki on the left, and Trepemeni on the right. These they carried by storm after hand-to-hand fighting. In the afternoon the Turks were reinforced by half a battalion from Vigla, and attempted in the most determined manner to regain possession of Trepemeni; but the close fire of the Greeks from the captured blockhouse, and the fairly well-protected broken ground on each side of it, compelled the Turks to fall back. On the low ground at the mouth of the pass the Greeks attacked an old custom-house which had been occupied by Turkish troops. Turkish infantry were also disposed among the mulberry-trees beyond the custom-house.

Prince Nicholas, with a two-gun battery, came up from Larissa in support of Dimopoulo's infantry, and shelled the custom-house, which afterwards took fire. In less than half-an-hour nothing remained of it but bare and broken walls. The Turks then fell back on Vigla, and it may be said

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PRINCE NICHOLAS OF GREECE

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that the Greeks remained masters of the situation, so far as this position was concerned.

At Ravenni Colonel Smolenskis was in command, and had his infantry well disposed both on the east and west sides of the open valley, with a masked battery of artillery near the centre of the flat. Under cover of the fire of the battery planted on the south crest of Vigla, the Turkish infantry advanced with admirable intrepidity against the Greek line, but they were met with a shower of shells from Smolenskis' masked battery, while the Greek infantry from their intrenchments poured volley after volley upon the advancing enemy. The Turks, although broken, came on in ragged line until they actually were in hand-to-hand contact with the Greek infantry. The struggle was tenacious, but the Greeks held their own, and the Turks retired on Vigla. They were followed for some distance by Smolenskis' troops, who at nightfall maintained the ground which they had gained.

The defence of Mount Elias Pass had been entrusted to the forces under the command of Major Kathiniotis, who had under him about 2000 Greek infantry, including a battalion of 'Evzones. On Saturday evening, April 17, he received orders to guard the blockhouse or station three miles from Papa Livado, at Kurtziovali and at Tafilneris and Drepani. Here, as at Nezeros, the Turks made

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their first attack on Saturday evening, but the Greeks held their own until the Sunday, when Turkish reinforcements to the number of 5000 men came at regular intervals from Elassona, with two mountain batteries; and the Greeks were gradually driven back from Papa Livado, Drepani, and Tafilneris. Kurtziovali was held with great stubbornness for twenty-four hours, but Colonel Mastrapas, who was in command of the whole position on this part of the frontier, ordered a general movement to the rear; misunderstanding, it was alleged, an order sent by the Crown Prince.

The Turks entered Kurtziovali and set fire to the church, where the Greeks wounded in the skirmishing throughout the whole day had been taken. There was no time to remove them when the sudden order to fall back came. The Turks made no attempt to rescue the poor fellows—indeed there appeared to be a determination on their part to make a holocaust of them. They were consumed with the church. Major Tagaras, who fell wounded, shot himself rather than be taken prisoner by the Turks. Colonel Mastrapas made a stand at the head of Elias Pass until Monday morning, when, reinforced, he again advanced towards Kurtziovali.

The attack on the Greek blockhouse at the top of Maluna was likewise begun on Saturday even-

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ing by the garrison of the Turkish blockhouse, aided by a force from Menexes redan. The fighting was desperate, and a Greek doctor, who said he was present, with whom I conversed, alleged that the Greeks drove back the Turks, and that had they been assisted by reinforcements from Ligaria, for which they sent, but which never came, they would have taken Menexes itself. This I doubt very much. At best it is one of the might-have-beens we are always hearing of in war as well as in the most peaceful and unromantic phases of civil life. The Greeks undoubtedly were driven down the pass on Ligaria, where they were attacked by another party of Turks who had come down from the direction of Kurtziovali after the successful occupation of that village. The fighting was continued at Ligaria for a couple of hours, but the Greeks were outnumbered, and fell back on Mati.

The loss on the Greek side during these attacks at Maluna and Kurtziovali was officially stated to be thirty killed and over three hundred wounded. It was certainly far more than that, as an officer with whom I spoke, told me that he himself had seen over one hundred dead bodies between Kurtziovali and Ligaria.

During Sunday night fresh troops were hurried up from Larissa and from the camp at Zarkos.

The question with Lieutenant Wester and my-

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self on Monday morning was, to which point of the frontier should we go. Accepting the statement that the Greeks had been successful at Ravenni and Bougassie, we thought that the most important operations would be found in the direction of the Maluna Pass. Accordingly, at an early hour, we crossed the Peneios, and rode across the plain towards Tyrnavos. From a score of points in the plain clouds of dust told that troops were being hurried eastwards. Along the main road to Tyrnavos there were two human streams each going in an opposite direction. Hundreds and hundreds of men, and even mere lads in their civilian attire but armed with rifles and cartridges, were hurrying, as they said, to join the fight. The other currrent consisted of villagers, with their household goods in carts and on the backs of ponies and donkeys, who were making their way for safety to Larissa; while shepherds were slowly driving their flocks in the same direction.

On a small hill on the northern shore of the river Xerias, at the entrance to Tyrnavos, was a heliograph station, and the operators were busy at work signalling to Karatzali. But all information was refused; and in fact it was significantly hinted to us by a somewhat surly officer that we had better return to Larissa. Not to be daunted, we resolutely passed into Tyrnavos, and at his head-quarters

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demanded an interview with Colonel Mastrapas. There were a score of orderlies about, and it was evident from the general excitement that serious events were happening. Colonel Mastrapas saw us for a moment and granted us a pass, accompanied with the advice that if we wanted to witness important military operations we should go in the direction of Bougassie Pass.

Accepting the advice, we rode along the flat banks of the Xerias for two or three miles till we came to the semi-circular sweep which the river makes at the opening to Bougassie. Here during the night a battery for two field-guns had been hastily thrown up in the sandy soil, with long lines of intrenchments on either side. Half-a-mile from this battery a battalion of the 5th Infantry Regiment was drawn up in line, but on inquiry we could not find what their next move was to be. The officers evidently did not know themselves.

We pushed on and entered the pass to the custom-house, which had been shelled and burnt the previous day. Here we found Greek infantry, regular and irregular, extended in loose line from the bottom of the valley up towards Sidero Poluki. Other lines extended from the east side of the valley up to Trepemeni. Prince Nicholas had a battery of two guns on the flat, a quarter of a mile in front of the burnt custom-house.

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The hills on the Sidero Poluki side of the pass were too precipitous for the movement of troops. Besides, it was believed that no Turks had come along from Vigla on that side. The advance was therefore made from the bottom of the valley through a long series of vineyards and plantations of mulberry and other trees; and along the slopes on the east side of the valley. The hills above were dotted with black figures of un-uniformed volunteers, who were going at their work with enthusiasm.

The action began at six o'clock in the morning with an interchange of rifle-shots between the outposts. Then Prince Nicholas' battery chimed in and threw shells on the Turkish batteries on Vigla. These latter only occasionally replied, their fire being directed more especially on Colonel Smolenskis' battery in the Ravenni valley. While the lines of regular infantry were slowly making their way along the bottom of the Bougassie valley the irregulars and volunteers were, with nervous energy, climbing the steeps on the east side, and firing wildly at the Turkish skirmishers. These latter withdrew in perfect order before the eager advance of the Greeks. It almost seemed as if the Turks were inviting their opponents to a rush, and an officer gleefully remarked to me as I passed him: "It is a parade to Damasi."

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There was little incident. At long intervals a shell would come singing along from the right battery on Vigla and plunge into the soft soil. But the guns appeared to be fired at random, for the missiles seldom fell in the neighbourhood of our troops, and only one perhaps in three exploded.

Lieutenant Wester and myself had left our horses at the entrance to the pass, and we thought of climbing up the hills to the west of Trepemeni in the hope of commanding a better view of Vigla and perhaps of the northern end of the Ravenni valley. But an exclamation from a soldier standing near by induced us to turn and look back. To our surprise we saw Prince Nicholas' battery limber up, move away past the custom-house and disappear round the shoulder of Sidero Poluki. The movement was inexplicable. The officer in command of the leading line, which with so much toil had pushed along the crest of the high hills overlooking Vigla, when he saw the artillery vanishing cried, "We are betrayed," and in impotent rage drew his revolver and shot himself. Presently an orderly, presumably despatched by Colonel Dimopoulo, came to each of the lines and ordered them to retire. There was nothing else for it; and the regular infantry sullenly and slowly marched back to the mouth of the pass. The irregular troops broke the formation which

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they had in some measure maintained, and began to clamber down the mountain-side in little groups. They were excitedly discussing the strange order to retire, and condemning in unmeasured terms their officers. A common remark was, "This will be a bad day for the Government: we could have taken Vigla in half-an-hour and been at Damasi in the afternoon, if we had been allowed."

It must be confessed that Lieutenant Wester and myself were completely nonplussed at the extraordinary turn of affairs; but all we could do was to retire with the troops. We attempted to gain some information from several officers whom we overtook, but they were as completely in the dark as we ourselves were as to what was to happen.

Picking up our horses, Lieutenant Wester and myself returned to Tyrnavos, which we reached about one o'clock. The town we found in a state of indescribable confusion. The mayor had issued an order to the civil population warning them to clear out; and the streets were blocked with carts and animals with pack-saddles which were being heaped with the household goods of the poor people. Failing to find a member of the staff in the house where the head-quarters had been established early in the morning, we sought the mayor, hoping to obtain from him a reason for the

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stampede of the civil population. He was calmly drinking a cup of coffee on the verandah of the café in the principal square of the town, surrounded by a group of soldiers who were excitedly discussing the probable approach of the Turks. The mayor smiled in a somewhat sickly fashion when we asked him for information. All he knew was that Colonel Mastrapas had told him to warn the people, for their own safety, to go away to Larissa; that the Turks had gained possession of Mati and were upon the Mount Elias Pass. There was no telling, he added, how soon they might attack Tyrnavos, for he understood the whole of the Greek army was coming there. Lieutenant Wester and myself made the best of our way through the crowded narrow streets, which in some parts were occupied as much by soldiers apparently in a hopeless state of disorder, as by men and women preparing to flee from the dreaded Turk.

Clear of the town, we rode hard in the direction of Maluna, and a mile on the way encountered an ambulance drawn up near the roadside. The doctor in charge turned out to be our friend who had piloted us but a few days before from Ligaria to the top of the Maluna Pass. He recognized and stopped us. I did not at first identify him: so haggard and so grimy was he. He told us how the Greeks had been fighting for twenty-three

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hours without eating, without drinking, without sleeping — how they had been driven back to Ligaria by overwhelming numbers and then on to Mati. An hour or two before we came up to him word had come down from the Mount Elias Pass that the Turks were there also in force, and the Greek troops were once more ordered to retire— this time falling back on Tyrnavos. The poor fellow spoke in tones as sorrowful as a heartbreak, about this terrible reverse to all the fond hopes which he and so many other amongst his companions had entertained regarding a triumphant Greek march into Macedonia.

Sympathizing with the good doctor and wishing him and the cause which he represented better luck, we pushed on for another mile and a half, when we encountered a battalion of infantry, footsore and weary, marching towards Tyrnavos by a side-road which runs past the foot of the Mount Elias Pass.

On our right, infantry were being deployed in lines at right angles to the road. We halted at the white marble ridge known as Kritiri, and leaving our horses at the base, we climbed the ridge to command a view of the plain. On the crest, with its long sinuous and erratic line, were extended companies of the 4th Regiment. They had formed for themselves a breastwork of broken

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THE FIGHTING AT MATI: PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE TURKS DESCENDING THE MALUNA PASS

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marble boulders—about the worst protection in the world as we thought. In fact, during the fighting in the succeeding days, the vast majority of casualties occurred, not from the direct hits of the enemy's bullets or shells, but from the stones and fragments of boulders which were thrown up by the impact of the Turkish missiles.

Nearly opposite the Kritiri ridge the main road to Tyrnavos forked. One branch on the right stretched across the plain in a south-east direction towards Kazaklar and Deliler. The middle branch ran in the direction of Karatzali, and the left followed the base of the mountain range to Mati, where the ascent of the Maluna Pass begins. A battery of six field-guns was in position at the junction of the roads, and in advance, perhaps half-a-mile, infantry were extended so as to cover each of these roads, in three successive lines. A mile further on, between the Karatzali and the Deliler roads, was a small Col or hill with, on its southern shoulder, a tiny chapel. Behind this hill, and on the right and left flank of it, a thousand Evzones were posted in line—those clear of the protection of the Col having thrown up a small breastwork of loose earth.

An attack by the Turks was momentarily expected; and why it was not made it was difficult to imagine, unless it were that Edhem Pasha had

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a smaller force at his disposal than we conceived. The suspense amongst the troops was great, and it was not alleviated when at half-past three o'clock the lines on the right towards Deliler received the order to retire. Half-an-hour later those on the left also began to march rearwards, and were halted behind the Kritiri ridge. At five o'clock, to the intense relief of all, three batteries of mountain-guns arrived from Larissa and took up position on the open plain between Kritiri and Deliler, while detachments of infantry were being hurried up from Larissa and the other posts to the west. Still no move was made by the Turks. When half-past six came, Wester and myself made up our minds that there would be no further fighting that day, and so hastened back to Larissa for the night.

On our journey back, half-way between Tyrnavos and Larissa, we found that the battery between the Tyrnavos and Kazaklar road had been mounted with six guns, and the earthworks on either flank of it considerably extended. On the north-west side of the Tyrnavos road was a battery of mountain-guns in position, and it seemed as if preparations were being made for the defence of Larissa in anticipation of an immediate advance of the Turks upon that town.

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CHAPTER VII

THE ASSAULT ON VIGLA

LARISSA was in a state of intense excitement that night (Monday, April 19th). Several thousand troops had arrived by special trains from Volo and were being marched through the streets to the roads leading east and west from the Peneios bridge. The squares were crowded with anxious people, and the wildest rumours passed current from group to group, of disastrous defeats and of equally brilliant victories by the Greek armies. There was a consensus of opinion that the most important battle of the campaign was to be fought the following day, and that the scene of it would be Ravenni and Bougassie. On what this opinion was based one could not discover, but some correspondents who had called at the head-quarters of the Crown Prince were given to understand that a combined attack was to be made on Vigla, and

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the pass to Damasi was to be captured at all hazards.

To Ravenni therefore we made our way on Tuesday morning. A mile and a half from Larissa, on a slight rising ground, we found a battery had been constructed for two guns of position of twelve-centimetre calibre. These were meant to command the mouth of the Bougassie Pass and the Kalamaki defile. At half-past seven we could see away on Mount Elias the smoke of guns. Colonel Mastrapas was evidently making a serious endeavour to recover Kurtziovali. No sound of cannonade, however, was heard from the direction of Maluna. At Kuzochiros we met the Macedonian chief Davelis, who had escaped from his raid into Macedonia and was now making his way to head-quarters at Larissa. He was very reticent as to what had taken place during his abortive undertaking, but he was anxious once more to go at the Turks in any capacity whatever. At the village was a well-equipped ambulance, but when informed it was under orders for the village of Gunica, which overlooks the Kalamaki defile and is quite unapproachable from Ravenni, the theory of "the most important battle of the campaign" was somewhat shaken in our estimation. A battalion of the 11th Regiment was here in reserve, much to the chagrin of Colonel Vosos, who said he preferred to be in action.

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After crossing the Peneios and turning sharp to the right into the Ravenni Pass, we could hear the dull roar of guns, not only right ahead but across the mountain to our left in the direction of Koutra, from which a subsidiary attack was to be made by the Greeks against Eleotherochorion. At Ravenni itself the engagement began at four o'clock in the morning with the regulation artillery duel. Colonel Smolenskis had planted three batteries—one of mountain-guns on the left slope of the valley, about 2000 yards from the base of the Vigla hill; a second was on the western slope two or three hundred yards further off; the third was a masked battery of field-guns in the centre of the valley 3000 yards from Vigla. One battalion of the 2nd Regiment was extended on either side of each of the batteries, and a battalion of Evzones was extended right across the valley, pretty well in advance of the artillery. In rear of the field-battery, in the centre of the valley, were four battalions of the 11th Regiment, who seemed to be making a move towards the Kalamaki defile. Asking for an explanation of this, if a grand combined attack was to be made on Vigla, the Colonel informed us that he had received orders to take three of the battalions at once to Tyrnavos.

For some time after the beginning of the engagement the firing from the Greek batteries was

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slow, but slower still on the part of the Turks. The latter threw shells, a small proportion of which however exploded, mainly on the Greek left. The Greek artillery under the personal direction of Colonel Smolenskis made excellent practice, and several shells which burst on the Turkish position on the crest of Vigla, did considerable damage, as could be seen from the ragged outline of the breastwork. The Evzones gradually advanced up the valley, followed at intervals by lines of the 2nd Regiment, and all kept delivering repeated volleys, varied by the loose rattle of independent firing, against the Turkish intrenchments on the face of Vigla.

At eleven o'clock the action ceased for nearly an hour. Colonel Mavromichaelis, who was in command of the whole of the troops in the Ravenni Pass, rode from the left to the right battery across the valley about noon. His appearance with his staff had evidently attracted the attention of the Turkish gunners on Vigla, for they saluted him with four shells in quick succession, and one of them burst in the immediate neighbourhood of the gallant Colonel; but, marvellously, not a soul was hurt.

There did not seem any intention on the part of the Greek commanders to order an assault to be made by infantry on Vigla, from the Ravenni side

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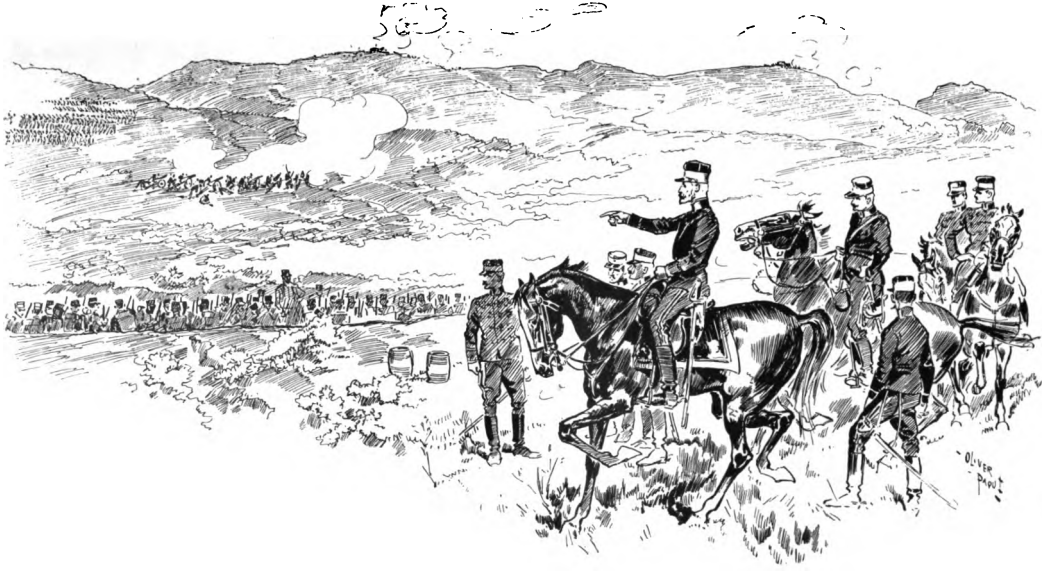

THE ATTACK ON VIGLA: APRIL 20TH. COLONEL MAVROMICHAELIS DIRECTS THE ADVANCE FROM THE RAVENNI VALLEY

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at any rate; and, as we heard a very hot fusillade and the quick roll of guns from Bougassie, we determined to ride round in that direction. Clearing the Kalamaki defile, we found at its eastern exit hundreds of soldiers busy constructing intrenchments, and on the other side of the river at Gunica, about the same number building a battery. "At last," said I to Lieutenant Wester, "the Greeks are realizing that an invasion of Thessaly by the Turks is a probable event, and they are beginning to do that which ought to have been accomplished months ago."

We arrived at Sidero Poluki about one o'clock, and on the slopes at the mouth of the Bougassie Pass found three battalions of the Crown Prince's Regiment in reserve, with a squadron of dismounted cavalry. Just beyond the old custom-house there was a battery of field artillery, and disposed in fighting line three battalions of the Crown Prince's Regiment and one battalion of the 2nd Regiment.

The north wall of the pass consists of three precipitous peaks. At six o'clock in the morning two batteries of mountain-guns had orders to take possession of the two eastmost peaks, the first being only two thousand yards in a straight line from Vigla, and the second perhaps three thousand yards. With gallant determination, this was accom-

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plished by eight o'clock, covered by fire from the field-battery in the valley and by volleys from the advanced riflemen on either flank of the encompassing hills. As soon as the mountain-guns had taken position, they opened a brisk fire on the Turkish east battery on Vigla, while the riflemen swarmed over the crest of the hills and began a fusillade on the Turkish infantry scattered along the face of Vigla. The Crown Prince's Regiment advanced through the cover of mulberry gardens in the valley and charged up a small hill in the immediate front of Vigla, driving the Turks back on to their intrenchments. On the right, along the summit of the most advanced hill, sharpshooters spread with marvellous perseverance, and poured a hot fire on the Turkish infantry. At two o'clock the Greek infantry in the Ravenni valley resumed their attack, in response to that in the Bougassie Pass, and for some time the roll of musketry was continuous, while the roar of artillery from all six Greek batteries was deafening.

We made sure that at last an effort was to be made to storm Vigla, and Lieutenant Wester and myself pushed on, on foot, to the advanced Greek position and occupied a post on the small hill immediately in front of the Turkish redoubt. I took a seat beneath the shade of a tree, beside a quiet pool, to wait the moment of assault which we

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thought so near. Turkish shells were shrieking overhead and bursting irregularly among the trees, but more frequently on the open ground on the east side of the valley. A constant stream of wounded men was being carried past to the rear. One poor fellow had been shot through the throat, and he literally blew streams of blood with every drawing breath. "Le pauvre diable. Il est fini," said Lieutenant Wester to me. The remark seems callous, but it was made in sympathetic tones. There was plenty opportunity to see the sad side of war at my post, for the ambulance-bearers halted at the little pool in order to administer water to their wounded comrades. The stoicism and even cheerfulness with which the vast majority of these poor fellows bore their sufferings was remarkable.

A Greek cavalry officer halted opposite to speak to some wounded men, and turning to me seemed astonished to find a non-combatant coolly writing his despatches so near the fighting line. "Have you no fear?" he said. "Well," I replied, "we must take risks in the discharge of the duty we have undertaken." Parenthetically I may say here, that a dead correspondent is useless, and a wounded worse than useless, for he is unable to perform his duty and becomes an additional charge on his employers. Still, there are occasions in

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which it is impossible that a correspondent can really describe military operations without incurring considerable danger, and then he has either to forget or to stomach his fear, if fear he have.

As the cavalry officer was leaving with a friendly adieu, he remarked with the astonishing optimism of so many of his compatriots, "We shall be in Damasi before nightfall; perhaps we shall meet there." I never saw him again.

At half-past three a battalion from the reserve was brought up on the right of the valley, extended in three lines. A shell from a Turkish gun dropped right in the middle of them, and exploded after burying itself deep in the loose soil. One man was knocked down and stunned for a few minutes by the wind of the shell as it passed very close to him, but strange to relate, not a soul was touched by any of the fragments. Throughout the campaign such incidents were not uncommon. Had the ground been hard or stony on several of the battle-fields, the loss in killed and wounded would have been very much in excess of what it was. But the loose, friable, recently-ploughed soil had the capacity of smothering the shells and preventing them doing much execution when they did explode.

The fighting line having been reinforced, the

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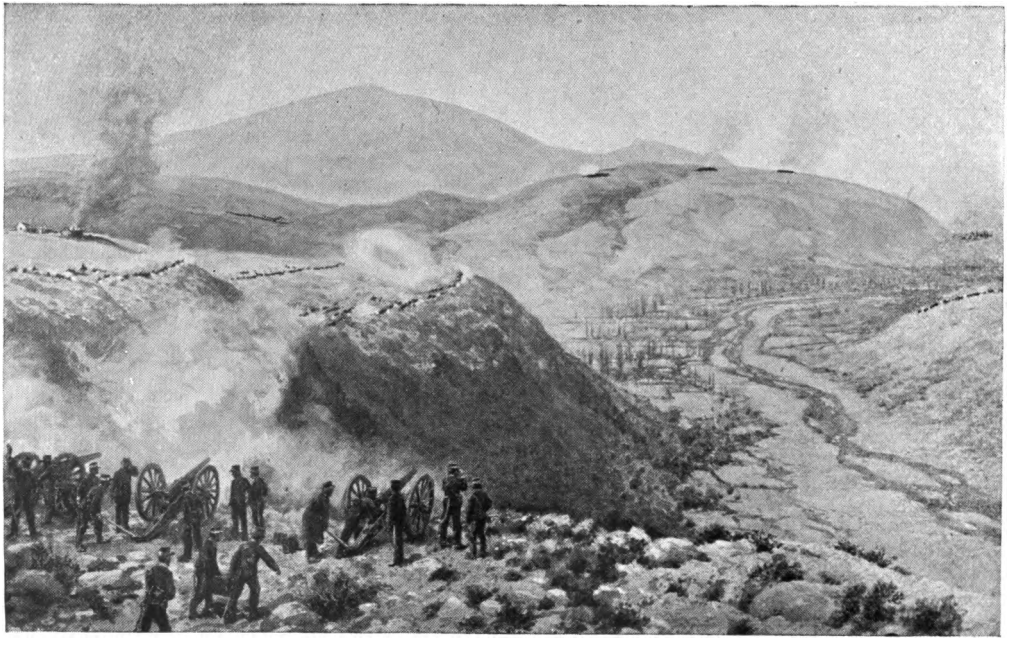

THE ATTACK ON VIGLA FROM THE BOUGASSIE PASS

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fusillade against the Turkish position was continued with intensity for about an hour. The order however never came for a general assault, and about six o'clock the guns both from the Greek batteries and from those on Vigla slackened their fire, while the infantry dropped into a desultory volley at long intervals. Darkness was approaching, and the engagement being over for the night, I returned to Larissa in order to forward my despatches.

It is futile perhaps to inquire now why it was that a general assault on Vigla was not ordered. When the Turkish position had been so evidently well battered by the Greek artillery, and when the Greek infantry had advanced so gallantly and so far on the Turkish position, there seemed no reasonable doubt that had the command to storm Vigla been given, say at half-past three in the afternoon, it might have been taken with a rush and the way open to an advance upon Damasi. The success of this operation might have compelled Edhem Pasha to withdraw, at any rate for a time, the advanced position which he had taken at the Thessalian foot of the Maluna Pass.

The ride back to Larissa was saddened, not only by the consciousness of failure to attain anything like a victory, but by the scenes presented on the roads. These were literally blocked by thousands

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of fugitives and their flocks and herds. The fear of the approach of the Turks had struck terror into their hearts. Women and children on foot were bent double with the weight of their household gods which they were bearing, as they imagined, to the safety of strong Larissa. Donkeys and horses were overburdened with loads and stepped slowly along the dusty way. Wagons, such as Attila brought with him from distant Asia, drawn by buffaloes, were heaped up with furniture and bedding, and creaked weirdly in the gathering night. Many of the poor people were overborne with the weight of their burdens and sorrow and fear, and flung themselves down exhausted by the wayside. But they lacked not sympathy or a helping hand from fellow-fugitives who, more fortunate, had better means of transport. The time had not yet come when the all-absorbing passion of self-preservation had deadened human sympathy and the prompting to mutual help. The heartrending scenes reminded one of Pliny's description of the flight from Pompeii during the eruption of Vesuvius.

On arrival at Larissa, I found that fighting had been going on all day on the Mount Elias Pass and at the mouth of the Maluna Pass. It was reported that Kurtziovali had been recaptured by the Greeks, a reinforcement of Evzones with a moun-

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tain-battery having ascended Mount Elias and after severe fighting, lasting many hours, had driven the Turks back some distance. It was also reported that the Turks who had occupied Mati on Monday evening, on the retirement of the Greeks towards Tyrnavos, had brought down from Elassona a regiment of Circassian cavalry. The Greek forces had advanced once more towards Maluna from Tyrnavos, and occupied a semi-circle extending from Kritiri to Karatzali. When the Turkish cavalry began to extend into the plain on the Greek right towards Karatzali, they had been raked by the field-battery of the Greeks, which had been brought up into position on the south of the Col, and by a battalion of Evzones lying well under cover amongst some corn-fields. The Circassians, after suffering severe loss, fell back with the remainder of the Turks on Mati.

The excitement at Larissa extended far into the night—troops arriving almost every hour from Volo and marching through the town to the front. At ten o'clock the Foreign Legion, in which was a company of English volunteers, under the command of Captain Birch, passed the great square and received a magnificent ovation. During the halt the Englishmen sang the "National Anthem," "Rule Britannia," and other war-songs, which

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roused the enthusiasm of the Greek crowd to the highest pitch. Disappointment prevailed that no great victory had been scored by the Greeks, but dismay had not yet taken possession of the ever-sanguine hearts of the population.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLES ROUND MATI

THE crux of the position was evidently around Mati, and early on Wednesday morning, April 21, Lieutenant Wester and myself made for that point. On the way we passed troops, both infantry and artillery, hurrying thither. The field-battery which had been in the Bougassie Pass the previous day had, we found, gone on to Tyrnavos after nightfall, and at least four battalions of infantry, which had been stationed in Bougassie and Ravenni, had likewise been drawn to reinforce the troops in front of the mouth of the Maluna Pass. The Crown Prince and General Macris had gone forward on the Kazaklar road, and there fixed their head-quarters in a tent. Colonel Mavromichaelis had been given command of the right wing. A stand was evidently to be made to prevent the Turks spreading further into the Thessalian plain, and to

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confine them to the bay in the mountain, so to speak, of which Mati was the centre.

We reached the Kritiri ridge early in the forenoon, and for the moment all was quiet on the plain, although heavy firing was heard away up in the mountains to our left. It was our intention to advance to the Col in the centre of the Greek position, and Wester and myself were skirting the shoulder of Kritiri when I heard a voice from the ridge warning us to halt. It was my old friend Mr. Charles Williams, the veteran War Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*. We climbed up the broken face of the ridge from which the marble had been quarried, and were there informed that we had just escaped riding into a somewhat novel fire-zone. Up in the Mount Elias Pass Colonel Mastrapas' division was hotly engaged with the Turks, the struggle being for the possession of Kurtziovali, which was the key to the Mount Elias Pass, and the free entry to Tyrnavos at the rear of the Greek main position. The rattle of rifles was continuous for quite an hour and a half, but the firing of the Turks seemed to be at a curiously high elevation, for the heavy Peabody bullets fired from the Remington rifles by the Turks came right over the mountain and fell, like showers of hail, on our side. One man had been killed shortly before on the road just where Mr. Williams had warned

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us, and in the immediate neighbourhood of his coign of vantage where we joined him, the boulders were pitted with the falling bullets. When the fire slackened and we withdrew from the shelter of a small projecting cliff, bullets could be picked up in any number. Occasionally, too, a shell came in the same fashion from over the mountain and exploded in the plain—one soldier being killed and several wounded by the fragments, immediately below where we sat.

The Greek troops had been considerably advanced since last we saw them both on the left and on the right; but the Col still remained the centre of the position. To the right of the Col was a battery of field-guns; still further to the right a battery of mountain-guns. Left of the Col, and in the centre of the plain between the Karatzali and the Mati roads, was a battery of mountain-guns. Three squadrons of Greek cavalry were operating on the right to protect that flank. The infantry were extended in lines across the plain in extemporized intrenchments.

At ten o'clock we could see from our place on the Kritiri ridge the long sinuous line of Turkish infantry marching down the zigzag road of the Maluna Pass, followed at half-past one by three squadrons of cavalry, two batteries of mountain-guns, and two more battalions of infantry. About

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the same time the firing up towards Kurtziovali ceased, and the Turkish battery placed just below Mati opened fire on the Greek line, but without effect. The fire was returned by the Greek field-battery on the right. At half-past two a column of Turkish infantry, supported by a battery of field-guns, advanced on the village of Karatzali, which they speedily set on fire, and half-an-hour later dense smoke from the village of Ligaria showed that they had also burned that village. Meantime the Greek troops were being marched and counter-marched across the plain from Kritiri to Deliler, the object apparently being to strengthen various parts of the line in view of a Turkish assault. While these manœuvres were going on, the Turkish artillery again opened fire, but the shells fell very wide, or were swallowed by the loose soil, and did no execution whatever. A little later a strong column of Turkish infantry, between two and three thousand in number probably, marched clear of the smoking village of Karatzali and began to deploy in the most beautiful manner on the sloping ground between that village and the wooded plain on their front. It seemed as if they were determined to make an advance and that the anticipated battle was about to begin. The skirmishers on their right opened fire on the Greek advanced line, to which the latter responded, and the artillery on

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both sides threw a considerable number of shells. But it was only a momentary sputter. The firing ceased in a quarter of an hour or so, and then, with the exception of a single shot at long intervals, there was no more fighting. The troops of both armies bivouacked in their positions.

It was getting dark when Lieutenant Wester and myself reached Tyrnavos, where we determined to spend the evening, as we thought it certain from the look of affairs just before nightfall that a decisive battle would take place probably early on the following morning. We found quarters in the house of a Greek in Tyrnavos. He had already sent the female members of his family away, and was in the act of packing up the most valuable of his household treasures for the purpose of himself leaving for Larissa. But he good-naturedly allowed us to camp in a large room, fitted in the usual fashion with raised benches, on which we made a comfortable enough bed by means of our own rugs, and quilts with which our host provided us. From the balcony of our chamber we could see the deep red reflection of the burning village of Karatzali, but a second reflection to our left attracted our attention. We sallied out, and learned that the latter was caused by the flames of a house in Tyrnavos itself, which had been accidentally set fire to. The streets were alive with soldiers who

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were arriving from Larissa and from other points to the west, and some of the passages were all but blocked by long lines of mules bearing ammunition boxes, and by bread-carts. The cafés were crowded, and with the buoyant optimism so characteristic of the race, officers and men were talking of the manner in which they were going to drive the Turks up the Maluna Pass on the morrow. We returned to our quarters and to sleep.

About half-past five in the morning (Thursday, the 22nd), while we were discussing a hasty breakfast, a gun was heard away to the right. "The action has begun," said Lieutenant Wester. Two more guns followed as we rode clear of Tyrnavos, and then all was quiet. When we reached Kritiri we found that the Greeks had extended their left line up into the mountain, not far from Kurtziovali, to which a few reinforcements had been sent during the past night. On the right they had extended past Deliler to Kutavi, and the reinforcements which had come had evidently been employed to strengthen that part of the front, where also two batteries of mountain-guns, which had come up the Kazaklar road, had been placed in position. The Turks, on the other hand, had fetched two batteries from Mati, one of four guns and the other of six, and planted them right in front of Karatzali. The

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batteries on both sides exchanged a shot at long intervals till about half-past eight, when a large force of Turkish cavalry appeared on the Greek right, and seemed to be making a move in that direction, which was all along our weak point. The field-battery on our right-centre opened fire upon them at once, and one shell dropped right in the midst of a squadron, causing, as was plainly to be seen, considerable loss, and they retired back in the direction of Karatzali. For an hour thereafter the artillery fire on both sides was continuous, and the Greek field-battery raked not only the Turkish batteries but played some mischief with the lines of the Turkish infantry on the slope before Karatzali. The Turkish shells were thrown at from 3000 to 3600 yards, with the intention of shaking the Greek centre, but actually no damage was done, except to kill a mule of the ammunition train in the rear. Three shells from the main Turkish battery burst in the loose soil of the Greek field-battery, but no one was injured. An additional battery of mountain-guns arrived from Larissa about eleven o'clock, and took up a position on the left bank of the Xerias river, near Mussalar, in which direction Turkish infantry had been extended and were endeavouring to intrench themselves. This battery speedily opened fire upon the Turks, and a demonstration being simultaneously made

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by a couple of squadrons of Greek cavalry, the Turks fell back.

Shortly after noon, fire ceased on both sides on the plain, but once more the guns were heard booming up in the mountain in the neighbourhood of Kurtziovali. During the lull Wester and myself left Kritiri ridge and joined our wagon down on the flat ground in order to take some lunch. I had just left the wagon to return to the ridge, Wester remaining to write a letter, when I heard the shriek of a shell so close as to be dangerously near. I threw myself at once prone on the ground, and in a moment there was an explosion. The shell fell within three yards of the wagon, fortunately in loose soil, and no injury was done. Had it fallen as many yards on the other side of the wagon it would have been amongst broken boulders of marble. Little chance of escape from injury or worse would there have been for Wester, myself, or a groom who was attending to the horse of the Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, quite near. So near indeed was it that the horse fairly shrieked and plunged with terror, and galloped across the plain.

During the afternoon the Turkish infantry, who had been extended in numbers against the Greek right, were, for some reason which could not be fathomed, withdrawn, and there was little incident

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during the whole of the afternoon. An occasional shell was exchanged between the opposing batteries.

As the promised battle was evidently not to take place that evening, I left for Larissa at five o'clock with despatches. There I learned that serious news had come from the extreme right, which fully explained the persistent efforts of the Turks to get possession, on Saturday and Sunday previous, of the hill Mount Annunciation, which commanded the pass at Nezeros down to the Vale of Tempe. A Turkish division, I was told, consisting of at least 10,000 men, had on the Wednesday night forced the passes at Viodendros, Analypsis, Nezeros, and Rapsani, and descended on Dereli in the Vale of Tempe, from which there was a road leading round the base of foot-hills to Karatzali. This accounted for the persistent attempt in the morning of the Turkish infantry to extend to their left, as it would enable them to join hands with a Turkish force coming up from Dereli. From the whole right frontier line the Greek troops had fallen back on Mackrychori, which commanded the road from the Vale of Tempe to Larissa.

Riding out early on the morning of Friday, I found on reaching the Kritiri ridge overlooking the battle-field, that the development of the position in front of Tyrnavos was being continued. Late the previous night Colonel Andonowitz had

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arrived from Zarkos with a brigade of the second division, and General Macris posted this brigade on the right, south of the village of Deliler.

The right wing of the Greek army was now composed of eight battalions of a thousand men each, under General Mavromichaelis. The left wing, under the command of Colonel Mastrapas, was composed of five battalions. Six batteries of artillery—thirty-six guns in all, of which six were field- and the rest mountain-guns—were in position in a semi-circular line extending from the Mati road to Deliler, which was the point of our extreme right.

One battery of mountain-guns occupied the shoulder of the hill to the left of the Mati road, and from this lines of infantry stretched down the slope across the road and on to the plain, where another battery was fixed in order to play on the Turkish lines in front of Karatzali. The Col or low hill, which formed practically the centre of the Greek position, was intrenched along its east front and occupied by the 4th Battalion of Evzones, while to the rear, in reserve, was a battalion of the 5th Regiment and the Foreign Legion, both protected in large measure from the searching shell-fire of the Turks by the Col.

On the right of the Col was a battery of mountain-guns. Four hundred yards away further

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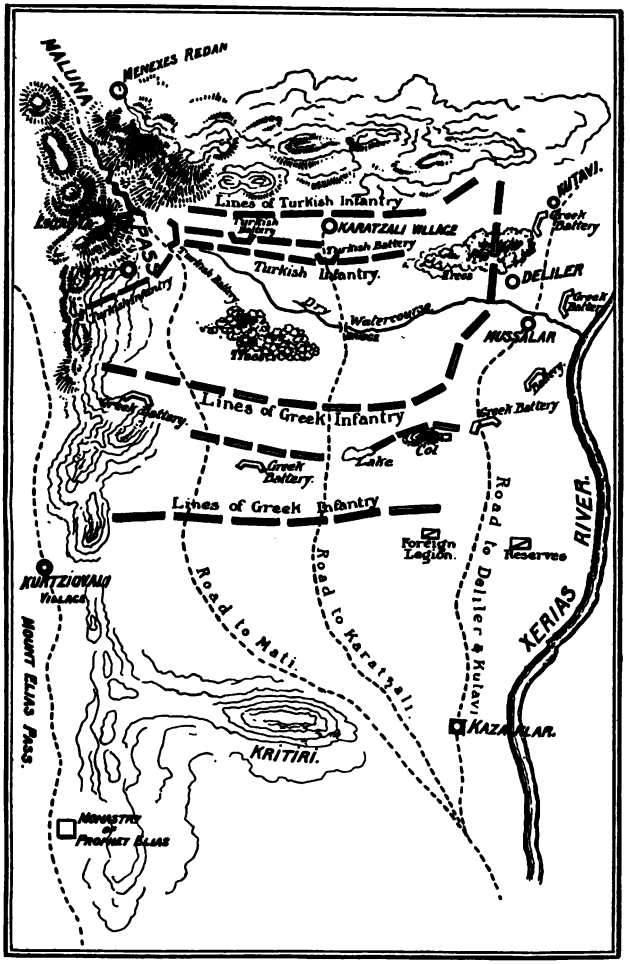

SKETCH PLAN OF THE POSITION AT MATI: APRIL 23RD

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to the right was a battery of six field-guns, and at intervals of from 1300 to 1400 yards, to the village of Deliler, were other batteries of mountain-guns.

The cavalry brigade, consisting of five squadrons, was utilized mainly on the right for the protection of what unquestionably was the weak spot in the Greek disposition, as subsequent events proved.

The plan of the Greek commander was evidently not to press the attack on the Turkish lines until additional reinforcements arrived from Athens, and therefore throughout the day there was little disposition to advance on any part of the extended field.

The Turkish force consisted of not less than 9000 infantry, and three regiments of cavalry. They had twenty-two guns, of which ten were field, and the rest mountain-howitzers, in action throughout the day.

From dawn until ten o'clock there was an interchange of artillery fire between the opposing forces, and then a battalion of Greek infantry was sent up the mountain to the left of Mati in support of the battery of mountain-guns. The latter opened fire on the Turkish lines in front of Ligaria and along the low ridge which extends from the mouth of the pass to the village of Karatzali. The Greek infantry kept the Turkish right engaged with fairly continuous volley-firing for an

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hour or more, but so far as I could see with comparatively little effect, except perhaps, to check any possible advance of the Turkish right up the east side of Mount Elias to the assistance of the Turkish force, which was, as we could hear, operating on the other side of the mountain in the direction of Kurtziovali. Of course the Turks returned the fire, and from ten till a quarter to twelve the fusillade was continuous and intensive. For some time the Turkish artillery fired shrapnel, but it was astonishing to note how little damage was done. As a matter of fact, the shells invariably burst at too high an elevation, and in consequence they lost their effect, even in demoralizing the troops against which they were directed. About noon we heard a tremendous infantry fire from over the mountain in the direction of Kurtziovali, but shortly after midday firing ceased on both sides all along the line.

About one o'clock it was evident that the Turks meant to make a strenuous movement on the Greek right. They brought up from the shelter of the village of Karatzali a force of not fewer than 3000 men, supported by two batteries of artillery, and marched against the village of Kutavi. This village was held in some strength by Colonel Mavromichaelis, who had a battery of mountain-guns with him. It was beautiful to see

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THE FIGHTING AT MATI: COLONEL MAVROMICHAELIS WATCHING THE BATTLE FROM KUTAVI

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the Turks deploying as they approached the village and opening fire against the Greek infantry, well posted in the open and amongst mulberry-trees, which to some extent screened Kutavi. The artillery fire on both sides was rapid, but that of the Turks was wild, and it really effected nothing. They again used shrapnel, and once more their elevation was so high as to render it practically of no effect.

Mavromichaelis sent urgently to General Macris for reinforcements, and these were drawn from the right-centre.

In the meantime, about four o'clock, a desperate attack was made by the Turks on the Greek left, in sympathy evidently with a renewed demonstration against Kurtziovali, the strength of which could be imagined from the echoing salvoes which swept over the mountain to our left. The furious fire of the Turkish artillery was returned with interest by the two batteries of mountain-guns on our left and left-centre, and by the fine play of the field-battery on the right-centre. The Turkish infantry lines moved from their intrenchments, and firing with spirit, advanced against the Greek infantry on the left and right of the Mati road. But the Greeks, standing well to their positions, poured volley after volley upon the advancing Turks, checked them, and compelled them to

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retire once more to their protective works. In turn the Greeks advanced, supported by the strong fire of their artillery, and gained a position a quarter of a mile in advance of their previous shelter, from which they kept a continuous fusillade until evening was setting in.

About six o'clock fire slackened on both sides, and many believed that the fighting for the day was practically over. Indeed the majority of the Correspondents left the field in the full belief that, if anything, the Greeks had got the best of the day's engagement, and that if only the Commander-in-Chief had ordered a combined and vigorous assault, Edhem Pasha would have been compelled to withdraw up the Maluna Pass.

For some time I had been trying to spell out the meaning of the vigorous attack on the Greek right, and kept watching that position with some anxiety. I had heard the previous night that a Turkish force had swept down from Nezeros, through that dreadful defile which we had passed ten days before, driving the Greek garrison out of Dereli, on the banks of the Peneios, at the mouth of the Vale of Tempe. Discussing the matter with Lieutenant Wester, both of us reached the conclusion that this Turkish division from Nezeros was meant to threaten the right flank of the Greek army in front of Mati. Hence the anxiety with

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which we watched events away to our right. At half-past six two Turkish batteries re-opened fire in the most furious manner against the Greek positions at Kutavi and Deliler, while the Turkish line was still further reinforced by two battalions from Karatzali, the whole making a resolute advance against the Greek line. Darkness was setting in, and the flashes from the long straggling line of rifles, as volley after volley was discharged on either side, contrasted vividly with the strange green light on the background of the mountain.

By and by the infantry fire slackened, and it seemed to us in the dim gloom as if the Greeks had withstood the strenuous assault of the Turks and held their own. Suddenly, however, a strong force of Turkish cavalry was seen to rush from behind the wooded surroundings of Kutavi, and with a fine sweep joined the squadron of Turkish cavalry which had been supporting the assault on Kutavi and Deliler. In fact, the Nezeros division of the Turkish army had joined hands with that which had deployed into the Thessalian plain from the Maluna Pass. Immediately thereafter the villages of Kutavi and Deliler were seen to be ablaze—the signal that they had been taken possession of by the Turks; and we left the battle-field for Tyrnavos, the gathering night relieved by the lurid light of the burning villages.

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CHAPTER IX

THE RETREAT FROM MATI AND STAMPEDE TO LARISSA

IT was quite dark when we reached Tyrnavos, where Lieutenant Wester and myself were joined by Mr. Atkins, the Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. The dragoman of the latter gentleman, with some diplomacy, found for us an empty house, where we might take up quarters for the night, fully anticipating, as we did, that the battle would be resumed in the early hours of the following morning. Our camping ground was a large room with a divan round three of the sides. We arranged our rugs and our paraphernalia, and devoted half-an-hour to cleansing the smoke of battle from at least our hands and faces. Meantime the invaluable Pedropopulos, as Atkins' dragoman was euphoniously called, had been looking after our evening meal. A requisition of a couple of dozen eggs, which I

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THE STAMPEDE TO LARISSA: "RUN, RUN! THE TURKS ARE UPON US"

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had made from a peasant, enabled him to provide us with an excellent omelette, and our dinner was supplemented by some tinned meats which we had brought with us from Larissa. My own dragoman had been in the meantime out on a foraging expedition, and had returned with two vases of most excellent peasant wine and a lump of goat-milk cheese, with which we finished our repast.

Even the hardships of a Special Correspondent's life have their lights as well as their shadows, and when the after-dinner pipe was kindled we were probably as happy as it was possible in the circumstances to be. Of course we talked of the events of the day and of the probabilities of the morrow. Lieutenant Wester set himself down to write a letter to his Stockholm newspaper. Mr. Atkins was extending his notes. I, having forwarded my despatch by special messenger to Larissa, threw myself on the divan, with my saddle for a pillow, and was dreamily ruminating on the chances of a Greek success at daylight—or otherwise.

Half asleep, I heard Mr. Atkins propose that we should go to the café in the centre of the town, which we had so frequently passed before, and complete our material happiness by the enjoyment of a cup of black coffee. Somewhat unwilling through my weariness, I fell in with the arrange-

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ment, rebuttoned my gaiters, and the three of us went out into the dark night.

The house where we had taken refuge was in a secluded part of the town, and when we emerged into the little narrow street from the front garden, I remarked to Lieutenant Wester, "How still the night air is." Just over the ridges of the houses we could see a ruddy glow, but otherwise the streets were in Stygian gloom, relieved only at long intervals by a small petroleum lamp. Anon we came upon the main road leading towards the café, and there, to our mutual astonishment, we found an ammunition train, not advancing to the front as one might have expected if the battle were to be resumed at daylight, but marching in the opposite direction.

No one either in the train or in the street was able to respond to our quest for information, our knowledge of Greek being *nil*, and their knowledge of English, French, German, or Swedish being equally *nil*. We therefore resolved to return to our quarters, secure the services of our dragomen, and make inquiry as to the cause of this extraordinary movement. Accompanied by a linguistic guide, we made our raid on the café, which a few hours before was a quaint open-fronted shop giving on a small square, in the centre of which was a well shaded by an enormous plane-tree. Instead of the

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bright lights and busy scene of the previous evening, all was dark.

An ominous silence was in the streets, until we came to a thoroughfare which communicated directly with the road from Mount Elias. Here the dead silence was broken by the weary tread of weary men and weary animals, plodding along they knew not why or wherefore. It was useless inquiring as to the meaning of all this mysterious movement. Officers and men knew nothing. They seemed to care nothing, except that they wondered when this dreary trudge was to end and when they might obtain some rest.

We sought the principal square of Tyrnavos. It was choked with baggage-wagons, soldiers, mules bearing ammunition on their pack-saddles, and broken commissariat carts. Gleams of light came from one house, and in response to loud knocks we were admitted to the large public room of a café. Here several civilians were discussing matters with animation. Perhaps a score of soldiers from various regiments were sipping coffee with a half-dazed expression, and half-a-dozen men in their fustanellas were eagerly relating the events of the night. At the other end of the room a man presided over the little charcoal furnace at which the black Greek coffee is prepared, and Wester said to me, "At any rate let us have our coffee as we

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proposed." While the decoction was being made ready, we entered into conversation with a man in Western attire who had entered the room. He turned out to be our old acquaintance the demarch or mayor. He informed us that a retreat of the Greek troops had been ordered; that nearly all of the left wing had already passed Tyrnavos, the others having gone by the Kazaklar road; that the Turks were advancing on Tyrnavos over the Mount Elias road, and that they would be there in a very short time. He advised us at once to leave for Larissa. He said he had just been by himself, or his deputies, all over the town warning the few inhabitants who had remained to take their immediate departure if they hoped to save their lives.

There was one sceptic regarding this retreat. At the next table to us sat a man of undoubtedly floury dress, and with him a patriarch in fustanella costume, with bald head and long grey beard, whom we at once christened "Demosthenes." "Demosthenes" was eloquent as to the absurdity of the scare. Said he, "Did I not see with my own eyes a battery of artillery only a few hours ago marching in the direction of Mati? How then can there be a retreat?" His dusty companion at the table said, "And have I not been to-day working like a Trojan in baking ten thousand

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loaves to be sent to our troops to-morrow. Do you think the Greek Government is going to ask me to bake all these loaves and to pay me for them—for the Turks?"

While this discussion was going on the proprietor of the café was busy nailing up all the windows. A bang fell presently on the door, which had been in the meantime locked. The proprietor opened the door, and a pale-faced man with a rifle slung across his shoulder made a hurried announcement. We learned that this was a call to all at once to run, as the Turks were supposed to be on the Mount Elias road within a short distance of Tyrnavos. In a moment the café was cleared, the demarch being amongst the first to go, with a warning address to my dragoman that as we valued our lives we too should fly.

We were compelled to seriously review the situation, and returned to our house to hold a council of war. Lieutenant Wester spread his Austrian staff-map on the table, where the lamp was still burning with whose aid he had begun to write his letter, and demonstrated that even if the Turks were marching upon Tyrnavos from Kurtzi-ovali they could not possibly arrive before eight o'clock in the morning, and that the best thing for us to do was in the meantime to have a sleep and make our escape the best way we could at

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daylight. My dragoman, who had gone in search of further information, at the moment returned, and said that to remain there was madness. He certainly did not intend to do so. Atkins' dragoman supported mine. Indeed, he had already begun to arrange our belongings on the baggage-horse in the courtyard, and his groom had saddled Mr. Atkins' riding-horse.

The difficulty of course was how to get away. Lieutenant Wester's servant had taken our carriage in order to carry my despatches to Larissa. I was inclined to fall in with the reasoning of Lieutenant Wester and to take our chance of escape at dawn, but when the matter was further discussed, and the dragomen threatened to leave us to our own resources, I cast my vote for a departure as soon as possible. In the hurry-scurry of preparations, we were compelled to leave behind, much to the disgust of Petropopulos, nearly all the provision we had made for the following day's commissariat, and certainly not one of us hoped that good digestion would wait the fortunate Turk that would capture our cuisine.

With a generosity which I can never forget, Mr. Atkins offered to give me his riding-horse and that he should tramp it with Lieutenant Wester. Of course it was impossible for me to accept this, and when we left our quarters, Mr. Atkins on foot led

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his horse, trudging it along with Lieutenant Wester and myself—Pedropopulos following on the baggage-horse. As we groped our way through the deserted streets, we found that we were literally the last to leave Tyrnavos. I say advisedly the last to leave Tyrnavos, because Mr. Charles Williams, the veteran Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, reasoning as Lieutenant Wester had done, declined to move, at least then. He said that even if the Turks came he would trust himself to the protection of the British flag, which he at once proceeded to hang out from the balcony of the house which he had taken in possession. I may here say that Mr. Williams, some hours afterwards, retired on Larissa with the rear-guard.

From what I afterwards learned, the retreat had been decided upon about six o'clock, for at half-past that hour the Foreign Legion, which had been held in reserve, were ordered to fall back on Larissa, which they reached in good order about midnight. The left wing had instructions to retire through Tyrnavos, and the right wing by the Kazaklar road, on which the head-quarters of the Crown Prince and General Macris had been stationed during the last few days. The reason for the retreat was no doubt that Mavromichaelis' right wing had been outflanked by the Turkish advance from the Vale of Tempe. It also appeared

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that our left had been turned. The Turks had completely driven back Colonel Mastrapas' division, which had been operating up in the mountains at Kurtziovali, and had thus secured a free passage down the Mount Elias Pass on to Tyrnavos.

Our little party cleared the narrow lanes of Tyrnavos about midnight, dreaming of nothing more than a long tramp to Larissa. Just outside the town, and on a small plateau where the Greeks had had a heliograph stationed, we encountered a carriage which had momentarily stuck in the sand. A familiar voice came from the carriage, "Is that you, Rose?" to which I responded, "Yes." My interrogator was Mr. Christian, one of the numerous Correspondents of the *Times*, and he kindly suggested that I might find a place in the carriage, which he informed me belonged to Mr. Seppings Wright, the artist of the *Illustrated London News*. Mr. Wright was himself on horseback, and the other occupants of the carriage were the wife of an officer of Greek infantry, who had stayed in Tyrnavos till the last moment, a little son, and Mr. Wright's dragoman. Gladly accepting the invitation, which was cordially seconded by Mr. Wright, I entered the carriage. Wester and Atkins proceeded ahead, and I saw them not again until the following morning.

The carriage went at a snail's pace for a time,

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THE STAMPEDE TO LARISSA: CUTTING THE TRACES AND DESERTING THE GUNS

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and actually stuck in the deep sand of the dry bed of the Xerias river. The men had to descend, put their shoulders to the wheel, and help the vehicle across. We came up in the course of a mile with the Greek infantry in straggling order, footsore, and grimy, from four days' work in trenches and rifle-pits, and long exposure to the shell-fire—an experience sufficient to unnerve seasoned soldiers. Wright, who up to this point had been riding alongside the carriage, made a grim joke as to the retreat from Moscow without the snow, and then he forged ahead in the darkness, and I did not see him again until we met at Larissa.

At first there was a weird silence, contrasting with the ordinary incessant chattering in the Greek ranks. The night was dark, very dark. The stars burned holes in the black curtain of the sky. Away in the south-east was the red glare of the burning villages of Kutavi and Deliler.

Anon there passed us batteries of Greek artillery, mule trains, carts, wagons laden with household effects of the Greek villagers ; women and children in the most pitiable condition, all hopelessly mixed.

The order of retreat was completely lost. All arms were intermingled, and the confusion was completed by the shouts and rushes of Evzones and irregulars in every style of strange dress.

At the junction of the Tyrnavos and Kazaklar

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roads, the straggling lines of both divisions of the retiring army were heaped upon the road and on the ploughed land on either side.

Sullenness had now given place to clamour. Disappointed and dispirited, men forgot their weariness, and wild imprecations were hurled against the General and superior officers.

The retreat had become a rout. Our carriage was picking its way slowly through the crowds of desperate men, of crying women and children, of horses and donkeys overburthened with baggage, or amidst animals prancing with nervous fright.

I had just remarked to the *Times* Correspondent, who by the way had lost his own horse and all his baggage, that the Greeks at the mouth of the Bougassie Pass seemed signalling to Larissa with the night heliograph, when suddenly above the din of the confused masses on the road and adjoining fields came a roar, sharpening into a fierce sustained yell, rolling from the distant rear with lightning speed.

There was no rear-guard so far as I could see, and no screen of cavalry to cover the retreat.

In a few moments the yell could be distinguished into prolonged cries, "The Turks are coming. The Turks are upon us." And directly a dozen or more horsemen, with several riderless steeds,

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appeared on our left at full gallop, shouting in frenzied tones, "Run, run! the Turks are here."

Up into the night air there rose an agonized roar, fairly paralyzing the imagination, and which will remain in the memory for ever. The stampede was instantaneous. Animals were lashed by frantic drivers; men, women, children, and soldiers pell-mell made a rush forward, many falling and being trampled to death. Vehicles of every description were overturned, mixing bedding and furniture with ammunition-boxes; while the horses, donkeys, oxen, and buffaloes were jammed in terrible confusion.

From the depths of the black night on our left other horsemen appeared in mad career. One story is that these were really Circassian cavalry who had debouched from the Bougassie Pass, and had actually intermingled with the Greek straggling mounted troops. Personally, I am inclined to disbelieve this, and to think that the stampede was solely caused by fear and wild imaginings.

At the side of our carriage there suddenly appeared two soldiers, their faces blanched with terror. They jumped on the step. Mr. Christian and myself tried to keep them out. One levelled his rifle at my head, and he was about to draw the trigger, when suddenly their weight overbalanced the vehicle, the wheels of which had at the moment

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caught in a rut, and it overturned, smashing to pieces. The dragoman, the officer's wife and boy, and the *Times* Correspondent were thrown out, while I was pinned by the leg by the broken timbers.

Somehow or other I got my leg released, and with that curious psychological prompting to seize in supreme moments at trifles, I picked up a kodak which Mr. Atkins had entrusted to my care, retaining in my right hand my riding-whip. I joined Mr. Christian, who had gallantly come to my assistance. The other occupants of the carriage had disappeared into the darkness.

Then ensued a veritable pandemonium. In perfect insanity of terror, soldiers, irregulars, armed peasants began firing rifles in every direction. From front and rear, from right and left the bullets whizzed. The reports of the muskets were scarcely heard above the roar of human voices and the screams of terror-maddened animals. I had been at Shipka and in the hottest corner of Plevna, but I had never witnessed such wild and continuous fire. The whole plain was lit up by the constant flashes.

The *Times* Correspondent and myself stumbled into a roadside ditch, where we walked slowly forward, and at the height of the fusillade we lay down for a time. I turned to suggest to Mr.

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THE STAMPEDE TO LARISSA: THE PANDEMONIUM OF INDISCRIMINATE FIRING

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Christian that we had better move on, but found he had disappeared. Creeping out of the ditch, I was making my way in the direction of Larissa, when a new rush of frenzied men came from behind, and I was thrown down and trampled upon by scores of irregulars in their mad career. I had just gained my feet, when a burly, fustanelled Evzone rushed past me, turned, deliberately raised his rifle three inches from my head, and fired. I felt the flare of the flash, but just in time I ducked and fell prone, thus saving my life. Recovering my feet I walked on in the roadside ditch, anon on the ploughed land, as free as possible from the thickest of the stampede.

The maddened firing continued fully thirty minutes. Buglemen were then heard on the right sounding "Cease firing." But it seemed a long, long time before the continuous rattle of the indiscriminate fusillade slackened into single shots. The pandemonium had spread over many miles.

By and by I returned to the *chaussée*, stumbling over dead and dying men, women and animals. The scene was terrible—a piling of the agony of Pelion on Ossa with a vengeance. The way was strewn with ammunition-boxes, broken carts, furniture, bedding, soldiers' blankets and great-coats, and tin pannikins. The latter rattled amongst the horses' feet, which were entangled

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further by the blankets and great-coats. The horses, many of them riderless, already frantic with terror, galloped wildly amongst the crowds. Deserted guns, ammunition-wagons and carts, added to the obstruction. Traces of the artillery horses had been cut to enable the drivers and fugitives to fly. Those without horses attempted, and in some cases succeeded, in dislodging those possessing horses, and mounting the captured steeds they disappeared into the dark night.

So for several miles the maddened crowd straggled on.

Some officers knew and did their duty. They ordered the trumpeters to sound the "Cease firing," and rode about calling "Halt." Others lost their reason, and rushed ahead as terror-stricken as their men. One gallant officer endeavoured to bring his fellows to their senses by presenting his revolver at them, and shouting "Stasu" and "Arretè." But he might as well have called upon the whirlwind to stop.

General Mavromichaelis, who evidently had reached Larissa along with the Crown Prince and his staff some time before, rode back some distance, in the hope that he would be able to assist in arresting the stampede. Two miles from Larissa the roadway is carried on an embankment, at the beginning of which an officer succeeded in inducing

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GREEK OFFICER ATTEMPTS TO RALLY THE FLYING TROOPS. HE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE CALLED UPON THE WHIRLWIND TO STAY

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half a company of footsore infantry to fall in ; but thousands continued the pell-mell rush for Larissa, heedless of everything. One battery of field-guns which retained perfect order, turned aside into a meadow on the east of the embankment, and just beyond this battery I overtook my old friend, the Swedish engineer, limping along, dazed with excitement and fatigue. He carried his rifle by the shoulder-sling, his bandolier was three parts full of cartridges, he wore the serge suit and felt hat with which he had landed in Greece, and in this fashion he had formed one of the Foreign Legion. He had lost his comrades during the retreat, and nothing would convince him but that the Circassian cavalry had really been the cause of the stampede. "I saw them," he said in excited tones, "I saw them with my own eyes, and how I escaped I cannot tell!" His enthusiasm for phil-Hellenism had dissipated, and he had forgotten the harmonies of the march which he had composed for the Volunteer Army. It was to a very sad tune indeed that he crawled, more dead than alive, into Larissa. The next time I saw him was in the great square at Athens, sipping a glass of beer, and waiting with a sated enthusiasm for a steamer which might convey him to Northern Europe.

The entrance to Larissa from the north is by a bridge across the Peneios. Here the pile of

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fugitives, with vehicles of every description and guns and horses, was terrific, and the struggle to get across the bridge was for hours agonizing. It is impossible to describe the terrible scene. Under the lee, as it were, of an ammunition-wagon, I gained the further shore, and made my way to my quarters in Larissa, reaching there about two in the morning.

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CHAPTER X

EVACUATION OF LARISSA AND THE FLIGHT TO VOLO

THE streets of Larissa presented scenes of indescribable confusion. Troops of all arms, inextricably mixed, threw themselves down in utter exhaustion, heedless of the calls of voice and trumpet. They seemed to imagine that they had reached at last a haven of comparative safety, and were for the time being disinclined to move from their stony resting-place.

Some officers bestirred themselves at the south end of the bridge across the Peneios, just in front of the fine though ruinous Turkish mosque which crowns a rising ground overlooking the bridge, and diverted as many stragglers as they could influence towards the large caserne outside the ancient fortifications. Here a few thousand were got into a comparative state of order for the line of march towards Pharsala, which was the objective point of

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the retreat. But as they were afforded neither rest nor much-needed food, the line speedily became once more a disordered and dispirited rabble.

The inhabitants of Larissa learned with certainty about two o'clock in the morning something of the disaster which had occurred. They rushed from their houses in every variety of disarray, and added confusion to the already blocked streets and passages of the town. The mere mention of Turkos was sufficient to create a frenzied panic; and men, women, and children ran, they cared not in what direction. At moon-rise matters became somewhat calmer, and when the soft grey light of dawn chased the shadows from the narrow thoroughfares and the angles of the large square, emotion was reduced to a restless movement hither and thither, and anxious discussion as to what should be done in the immediate future.

Of course rest was impossible for any one. I was anxious about my companions in the stampede. Lieutenant Wester had not arrived at his quarters. I went to the café of the Hotel Olympus, which was crowded with fugitives panting from their long exertions, and with townsmen pallid with fear. The air beat with the terror of the unknown. About a quarter of an hour afterwards Mr. Seppings Wright, the artist of the *Illustrated London News*, put in an appearance.

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He had made quite as marvellous an escape as I myself had done. When the cry came "The Turks are upon us," he had been riding along the *chaussée*, picking his way amongst the fugitives and the heaped-up vehicles as carefully as he could, and when the stampede became overwhelming and the firing became indiscriminate, he left the roadway and took to the ploughed land on the left side. It was in this direction, however, that it was believed the Circassian cavalry were approaching, and he found himself, in the dim starlight, the deliberate aim of many of the terror-stricken soldiers. The bullets whizzed around him as they had never done on any battle-field, and he was glad to safely edge his horse's way back to the high road. Here the fire had somewhat slackened, and he picked his way safely along until he reached opposite a little road-side cabaret, in front of which a lantern was dimly burning. On the ground close to the verandah, a fire of dry sticks had been kindled, and that threw a strong light across the roadway. For some reason or other, this strong light seemed to have still further excited the terror-stricken imagination of the fleeing soldiery and irregulars, and these kept discharging their rifles in the direction of the gleaming reflection. "It was," said Mr. Wright, "the most terrible moment of my life, as I rode across that lane of light with the bullets swishing and

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hailing around me. How both myself and my horse escaped being hit, heaven only knows." This crowning danger passed, his journey to Larissa through the swaying and still excited stragglers had been comparatively uneventful. He asked me if I had seen anything of his dragoman, and then I remembered what had escaped me for the time, in the sway and rush of my own perilous journey.

About three miles on the Tyrnavos side of the Peneios bridge, I had come upon a deserted gun, against which I rested a moment. Out of the deep shadow came a voice, "Oh, is that you, Mr. Rose?" Wondering who had recognized me in that wild and dark confusion, I discovered the figure to be that of Mr. Wright's dragoman. He was limp from exhaustion and the terrors of the night, and lame from a slight injury to one of his feet.

When the carriage was overturned and smashed to pieces, he told me he had seized Mr. Wright's large hand-bag, which he knew contained valuables, and endeavoured to save it from the wreck. He had pushed along stooping down when the firing was at its worst, until, stumbling over a heap of stones on the roadside, he was trampled upon by a rush of soldiers and others from behind. When he recovered himself the bag was gone, and with the pathos of helpless nervousness he said, "This is all I have been able to save," pointing to two heavy

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rugs. Nothing would induce the man to discard these rugs, although they were a burden to him in his lame and weary state as we trudged on towards Larissa. I did my best for him, giving him my arm on which to rest as he limped along; and in return, with his knowledge of modern Greek, he explained who we were to excited and inquisitive irregulars. The loss of the bag weighed on that man's mind, and ever and anon he would say, "To-morrow I shall ride out and look for it." But to-morrow's search never came off, and who knows into whose hands the precious bag and its contents fell. The courage with which Mr. Wright received the news of his loss was equal to that with which he has passed through many a battle-field; for, not only did it contain his private personal effects, including a considerable sum of money, but his standard sketches of the present campaign, and the manuscript and finished sketches of a book which he had written on the Benin expedition, from which he had returned only two days before he had been despatched to Greece.

Later in the morning, I learned that Mr. Christian of the *Times*, whom we all feared had been killed in the stampede, had safely reached his quarters, considerably shaken; and that Lieutenant Wester, and Mr. Atkins of the *Manchester Guardian*, had also survived their terrible experience. With a

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nobility which cannot be too highly praised, Mr. Atkins surrendered his horse to his dragoman, and walked with Lieutenant Wester the whole way driving in front of them their baggage-horse. Lieutenant Wester told me that he had been all through the Tunisian campaign with the French army, and that he had never seen anything so heartrending to a soldier as the terrorized stampede of both officers and men. My dragoman, after losing the greater part of my baggage, captured a runaway horse, on which he reached Larissa about three in the morning; and the strain upon him may be imagined from the fact that for nearly an hour he did nothing but laugh in a most hysterical manner, with occasional interjections, "Ah, it was awful!"

It is hard to say how many lives were lost during the stampede by the indiscriminate firing, and by being trampled or crushed to death by wagons, ammunition-carts, and guns. The estimate of five or six hundred I thought was exaggerated, but the real truth will probably never be known.

That some effort was made to cover the retreat at daylight was evident from the firing of guns in the direction of Tyrnavos and Bougassie.

People were paralyzed when they learned that no effort was to be made to defend Larissa. Of what use, they asked, were these beautiful batteries on

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the citadel, with their great cannon, and the batteries with their intrenchment out in the plain, covering the road from Tyrnavos? Were these to be deserted and left for the Turk? Were all the labour and expense expended upon them so much fool's play? These were vain questions at such a time of disorganization and demoralization.

Even in the midst of the terrible disaster, the opportunity for declamation could not be thrown away. When the sun had fairly risen and the throng in the Square was anxiously considering what was next to be done, an excited Frenchman mounted a table and shouted, "L'armée Grecque n'existe plus," and went on to condemn Generals and those in high quarters for incompetency. A pure type of the café politician also extemporized a platform, and called, "To arms, to arms! All is not yet lost." He however was amongst the first to make his way to the railway station and join in the mad rush for a place in the carriages reserved for the wounded.

This much may be said, that had the Turkish General known and taken advantage of the position created by the rout, he might have utterly destroyed the Greek army. The Sedan of Greece, however, was left to a later period.

The first hours of daylight were spent by the officers who had kept their wits in gathering

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together the scattered troops from all parts of the town, getting them into some sort of formation, and sending them out of Larissa towards Pharsala, the scene of Cæsar's famous victory over Pompey, and which with Domokos and the Phourka Pass formed the second line of defence of Thessaly.

The Foreign Legion was detailed as the rear-guard and to protect the town until its final evacuation. I could not learn whether any of the guns which had been deserted during the stampede had been recovered. There was official denial that any field-guns were lost, though it was admitted that the cannon of position in the batteries on the citadel had to be left there—the commander of artillery, however, having carried away with him the breech-blocks, so as to render them useless to the enemy.

One would have imagined that falling back as his troops did in disorder on Pharsala, a primary object of the Greek commander would have been to delay the advance of the Turks, and that to this end he would have blown up the bridge across the Peneios at Larissa, the only means for very many miles on either side of that town and of the main lines of communication to Pharsala, by which a following army could cross the deep but swiftly-flowing river. It was understood that the bridge had been mined, and it is hard to believe

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the story which was current, that when the engineer officer went to fire the mine he found the powder had been withdrawn. Even then, however, a charge of dynamite might have destroyed this important means of communication. No one, however, seems to have had the presence of mind to think of that. And so the bridge was left intact, for the more easy capture of Larissa by the invading and victorious Turks.

Remembering that I had seen a force of Turkish cavalry joining hands with the Maluna squadrons at Kutavi—an operation indeed which turned the Greek right and compelled the retreat—I thought that the Turkish General would have sent a few resolute squadrons from the Vale of Tempe down one or other of the two roads which run round the western shoulders of the Ossa range on to the plain of Thessaly below Larissa, and have cut the railway by blowing up two or three culverts between Larissa and Volo. This is what Stonewall Jackson would have done, and what General Gourko did in somewhat similar circumstances when he made his raid across the Balkans during the Russo-Turkish war.

It was not done, and the telegraph having informed the authorities that the railway remained intact, the first train to be despatched between six and seven in the morning, conveyed the Crown Prince and the staff to Velestino, and thence up

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the Kalabaka branch to Pharsala. Another train conveyed the wounded to Volo about nine o'clock.

By this time it had become generally known to the civil population that Larissa was to be completely abandoned by the military. Large crowds literally besieged the railway station in the hope of getting away before the arrival of the dreaded Turk. An attempt was made by the more selfish or terror-stricken to rush the carriages in which the wounded had been placed. The English section of the Foreign Legion, which had been placed as a guard at the railway station, had considerable difficulty in preserving the train for its primary purpose, and had indeed on several occasions to club their rifles in order to drive back the competitors for a place in it. Later a special train of trucks was made up, by which three thousand men, women, and children were got away, the women and children being packed in the trucks as close as sardines, and the men clinging to the roofs and platforms and even buffers as thick as bees in a swarm.

Simultaneously with, and even before, this exodus by railway, large numbers of the population had left the town by roads leading to Volo and Pharsala. These were in a state of frantic excitement; women, children, and even some men showing what they expected at the hands of the Turks by drawing their hands across their throats.

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THE EVACUATION OF LARISSA: THE FOREIGN LEGION PREVENTING THE RUSH OF THE TRAIN FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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In an incredibly short time, the roads were crowded with vehicles and animals of every description bearing household effects. Other poor people carried their belongings on their backs, and—oh, it was pitiable to see!—the very old, as well as the very young, struggled under the noon-day heat with burdens greater than they could bear. The pathos of the situation was increased when you came across little groups resting by the wayside, talking of the sad course of events, and saying over and over again, "Poor Greece!"—as much concerned they seemed to be for the national disaster as for their individual ruin. Many an anxious look was cast across the plain in the direction of the Vale of Tempe. There was a dread lest the Circassian cavalry should appear at some of the cross-roads and cut them off from their goal, or massacre them in cold blood. By half-past one Larissa was practically deserted. The laggards and the foot-weary were protected in their sad journey by the English section of the Foreign Legion, and they had journeyed half the way to Volo before the last train was sent back from that town to pick them up at the track-side.

Meantime I had been anxious to get on to Volo myself, it being necessary, on the breakdown of telegraphic communication from Larissa, to get on to the nearest line of communication with

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England. Being refused a passage either in the train for the wounded or that for the refugees, although several of the Correspondents were more fortunate in this respect than I was, I drove at speed to Volo, some thirty-eight miles distant, passing through the lines of fugitives, which I have feebly attempted to describe. When I reached Volo, late on Saturday afternoon, I found that town the scene of almost as much excitement as Larissa had been earlier in the morning. Long strings of fugitives arriving every few minutes spread rumours that the Turks would be there in a few hours. It so happened that there was no steamer in the harbour except the *Thessalia*, which had arrived that forenoon under charter of the Government to convey the wounded to Athens. The fear of the Turk was upon the majority of the population, and they sought escape by means of caïques, the graceful and generally swift-sailing vessels peculiar to the Grecian archipelago, which are used for trading among the islands. Many of the well-to-do classes, with their Lares and Penates, had already departed for Eubœa and other islands, and the quays were besieged with eager throngs, all anxious to get to sea. An open boat and the perils of the deep were preferable to the tender mercies of the barbarian Turk.

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CHAPTER XI

A JOURNEY BY SEA AND LAND TO ATHENS

TELEGRAMS were sternly refused at the Volo office, and there was nothing for it but that I should make the best of my way to Athens. I tried to use a little diplomacy in order to obtain a passage on board the *Thessalia*, which was to leave that night for Piræus with the wounded. I waited upon Mrs. Ralli, who was at the head of the Red-Cross Hospital, and offered my services as an attendant on the wounded during the voyage, stating what was perfectly true, that I had had some experience in the duty. The good and courteous lady seemed inclined to accept my services, as she admitted that there was a lack of male attendants. But, unfortunately for me, at that moment another nurse appeared—a Greek lady, who I believe is an M.D., and certainly was possessed with considerable penetration. She vetoed my little plan. In me she recognized the

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eager correspondent, refused to believe in my disinterestedness, and bluntly declared that I was more anxious to reach Athens with my despatches than to care for the wounded. Protest was in vain. Mrs. Ralli's heart was hardened, and even a deck-passage was refused me.

No one could tell when another steamer would arrive at Volo. Time was pressing, and I determined to hire a caïque. This was done through the intervention of my dragoman, and the offer of a generous reward. I went on board with my "carry-all," and the captain of the caïque was about to unloose his moorings, when to my astonishment a great commotion arose on the quay. In a minute a swaying and angry crowd surged towards our caïque, shouting out "Exo," which I discovered was the colloquial Greek for "Come out." The sailor who was unloosing the mooring was cast aside. Half-a-dozen men leaped on board, and threw my "carry-all" on to the quay. My dragoman protested, and an armed irregular raised his rifle and threatened to shoot him. I knew that one shot fired in the excited state of the population might lead to a renewal of the panic of the Larissa stampede, and I called upon my dragoman to beat a retreat, being at the same time roughly pushed ashore by the half-dozen men who had come aboard. The root of the matter was

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that many people of the baser sort who had watched the departure of so many of the well-to-do classes earlier in the afternoon, had made up their minds that if they could not escape no one else now should. As a matter of fact, amongst the hot cries that were hurled in the air by these excited men was the phrase, freely translated, "We must all die together."

Slipping through the crowd we found shelter for the moment in the Hotel Minerva. Meantime Mr. A. Merlin, the British Vice-Consul, telegraphed to the Minister at Athens, the Hon. Mr. Egerton, that matters were very serious in Volo, that it was reported that the Turks were within a short distance, and asking for the protection of a gun-boat. The reply of the Minister was that Mr. Merlin should be first sure of his facts. There was some indignation amongst several of the British people in Volo at the tenor of this answer. But it must be remembered that the crowning desire of the Vice-Consul in the Levant is that a British gun-boat should be sent to his port at his urgent request. When he succeeds, it is a thing to be talked of—and perhaps boasted of—for years after.

There were two hospitals in Volo, one the Regulation Military Hospital, and the other that of the Red-Cross Society under the charge of Madame Ralli and two English nurses, Misses Rider and

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Dunbar. From these the wounded were carried on stretchers to the quay, for transfer to the hospital ship *Thessalia*. While this was being done, an attempt was made to rush the steamer by a frantic crowd, and the ship was then taken out into the harbour. Thereafter the wounded and the Greek doctors were taken on board in small boats. The *Thessalia* steamed away shortly after nine o'clock, leaving however the two English nurses and six wounded men on the quay. The ladies were at their wits' end as to what to do, and went for advice to the British Consulate, where also the wounded soldiers were carried. Mrs. Merlin, with ready sympathy, at once constituted her house an hospital, and provided accommodation for both the patients and the nurses.

We had a long search for quarters, seeing the impossibility of getting away, at any rate that night, and were at last permitted to sleep for a few hours on the floor of a parlour in the Hotel Minerva, where even the lobbies were closely packed with fugitives. Throughout the night there was a murmur of excitement from every part of the town, and occasional shots were heard, which increased in number at daylight. At first it was thought that these shots were the firing of Greek and Turk, but it was found they were simply the local manner of ushering in the Greek

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Easter Sunday. We were early astir in a hunt after a caïque, and passed on the quay a gun drawn, not by horses, but by men and boys, directed by one soldier. Further down, the guns which had been in store at Volo were being shipped into a large caïque for safety.

At last we found a fisherman who was about to sail in a small craft with his family for Eubœa, and he agreed to take us as far as Oreos. We got on board as quietly as possible, and slipped away from the quay without molestation. As we were leaving the harbour, the water was covered with innumerable lemons, which had constituted the cargo of a caïque and had been thrown overboard to make room for fugitives. We amused ourselves fishing for quite a quantity of the fruit, and they afterwards proved a perfect god-send. The boat was small. It could not be said there was much of a hold. It was little more than a well, and there the fisherman's wife with several children were huddled amongst their household gear. We had to sit cramped in a very narrow space at the stern, and to cling to the stays to prevent being rolled overboard with every lurch of the small vessel. There was a slight wind when we started between nine and ten o'clock, but we had not gone more than a mile when the wind died away. The fisherman and another relative who had been sitting up to

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this time at the prow, hidden by the sail, then took to the oars and we crawled along at a slow rate. We had been assured that we should reach Oreos at the utmost in three or four hours; but the boat was so heavily laden, and there being only two capable of rowing at a time, progress was infinitesimal.

The sun beat down fiercely and the labour at the oars was exhausting. The gulf was studied with caïques, each laden to gunwale with fugitives and their furniture, but our course led us away from most of them. By and by a slight wind arose, but it was a head-wind, and rather delayed than assisted us. A handsome craft bore down upon us from the south with the following breeze, and luffed for a moment, to ask us the news at Volo. The captain was more concerned, however, as to whether he would find a market in Volo for his cargo of lemons, than as to the fate of the Greek army. And when informed that his fruit was such a drug in the market that it had been thrown into the sea, he bore away in an opposite direction to that of his original port. We were approaching the channel which leads out of the gulf when another large caïque appeared, laden far up the rigging with forage. It was bound for Volo, but actually tacked for a couple of miles in order to hear the latest intelligence from the seat of war.

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A rope was thrown to our boat, and we drew alongside. In exchange for our news, the captain of the caïque renewed our supply of water, which had long since gone short. We cast off and then made for Trikeri, a small bay in the toe of the peninsula which forms the Gulf of Volo. Here we ran in to give our rowers a rest, obtain a fresh supply of water, and allow the passengers to stretch their cramped limbs. The town of Trikeri is built on the top of a high ridge, some distance from the little haven, where there is a lighthouse which forms the guiding light into the gulf. When we got afloat again, the fisherman's relative, who had been quite surly during the day, elected to remain ashore. As the passengers were unskilled in the use of the oar, and relief could only be given by the fisherman's two young sons, our progress was very very slow.

Darkness crept on apace, and the night-wind which we had hoped for still remained a head-wind. We were right in the track of steamers and of other vessels coming from the south, and ran some considerable risk of being run down. This danger was suggested to me when I caught sight of a bright light some distance on our port-bow as we crawled along. The fisherman did not seem to be certain as to what the light might be, and he kindled a small slush-lamp, which he kept beside him for a

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little, in order to flash should any large vessel come near us.

I do not know that ever I spent such a weary and dreary time as these hours in that small boat, where it was impossible to move and equally impossible to stretch your limbs. By and by the fisherman determined that the light, which was still visible, was the Pharos at Oreos, our destination ; and no mariner ever fixed his eye on a beacon of hope more fondly than I did upon that friendly beam. The channel was intricate, and as we wound in and out it seemed as if we spent half our time in receding from Oreos and the other half in recovering our lost sea-way. The boys stuck manfully at their work, although down the cheeks of the younger one the tears of exhaustion were rolling. It was past midnight when at last Oreos was reached.

A café was found open where we induced the landlord to extemporize a meal for us, and we were further refreshed with a cup of Marsala, for which this part of the island of Eubœa is famous. Our dragoman left the café to find a means of conveyance to the other side of the island, and in his absence there was quite a rush of people into the café. Amongst these we were surprised to discover our old friend the demarch of Tyrnavos, who had reached so far in his flight to Athens—

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having arrived at Oreos some twelve hours before. We found that a steamer was expected; and sure enough, in half-an-hour, there was a long whistle which announced its arrival in the bay. If that steamer was going to Piræus we determined to get on board, if we had to take it by main assault. Obtaining a small boat, which we did with some difficulty, because of the demand by others as eager to get on board as we were, we rowed out to the steamer. Hailing the officer on watch, we were disappointed to find that it had fugitives on board, and only ran in here to land some, and was then continuing its voyage to Skiathos and other islands in the northern archipelago. We returned ashore and found a rickety wagon, horsed ready for our night-journey across the island to Ædipsos, which we reached at five in the morning, after a tiresome ride in the shaky vehicle.

Ædipsos is one of the prettiest villages I have seen in Greece, being surrounded with groves of ilex, arbutus, and oleanders, with giant plane-trees scattered in profusion on the hillsides and in the valleys. The inhabitants were afoot; women sweeping and garnishing the streets, and the men gathered round the café in a village parliament, gossiping about the news, and drinking a matutinal cup of black coffee. The demarch, on behalf of the population, received us with hospitality and

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invited us to share the morning coffee and cigarettes. On learning also that we desired to hire a caïque, he despatched a messenger to the seashore, which is about a couple of miles from the village, to have one ready for us.

It was seven o'clock ere we stepped on board this fresh boat with a crew of four sturdy, powerful sailors. The morning breeze blew freshly and was in our favour, so far, that it was carrying us southward. In a quarter of an hour we were abreast and within a stone's throw of Lipsos, celebrated from antiquity for its baths. On the shore are the ruins of what are known as Hadrian's bath and Nero's bath, both of which Roman potentates had sought the healing waters there. At several points you could see the water steaming out in a big column; and the shore at points was covered with deposits from the springs. The temperature at which they issue from the hillside strata is from 100° to 167° Fahr. The baths have a modern reputation, the water being deemed a specific for rheumatism and gout. They are frequented in the summer season by Greeks from all parts of the Levant, for whose accommodation quite a large town with modern hotels has been built just above the ancient ruins.

It had been our intention to cross the channel to Atalanti and there take carriage to Athens

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overland, but the wind again was against us. Our sturdy sailors assured us that it would be impossible, without very many hours of tacking and rowing, to get across the channel, and that it would really be quicker for us, the wind coming from the direction it was, north-east, to voyage all the way to Chalcis. Needs must when the Devil drives; and the lateen sail being spread, we ploughed the blue waters at a rare pace. The remainder of the voyage was uneventful, and Chalcis was reached about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Going ashore at once, we obtained some refreshment at a café in the square, while our dragoman went off on the search for a carriage. Of course we were immediately surrounded by hosts of inquisitive Greeks, who asked whence we came and whither we were going. They were eager to learn all about the battle, of which some account had reached them, and as to the disastrous retreat. One intelligent young fellow, having obtained all the information he desired, mounted a chair and translated our narrative, which was given in French, to an immense audience of intensely interested Greeks. He had just finished when our dragoman arrived, and reported that he had obtained a carriage, although the proprietor was rather unwilling to run the risk of a journey to Athens and

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the requisition of his horses on arrival. While we were discussing the matter the young orator, and a man in naval uniform, who turned out to be the harbour-master, said that a much better and quicker way of reaching Athens would be to take a caïque from Chalcis to Oropos on the mainland. The voyage would not last more than two hours, and the remainder of the journey to Athens could be done in a carriage in four hours, so that we could be in Athens before midnight.

It was agreed at once to take this course, and the harbour-master, with great friendliness, secured for us the caïque of a sponge-fisher. When we embarked the crowd followed us to the quay, and as we drew off before a fresh wind they cheered us heartily. As soon as we were clear of the windings of the narrow channel and were in the open, the wind rose, and we flattered ourselves that at last the weather was going to favour us. We spun along merrily, but as darkness approached the breeze increased to half a gale. The caïque was a heavy boat, being engaged in dredging for sponges, and the crew consisted of only two men—shall we call them the captain and the mate?—the captain being invariably at the helm. It was astonishing the deftness with which these two men managed the great sail. First one reef and then another was taken in; and then we were informed that we

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must run for shelter to the lee of a promontory on the island of Eubœa, until the gale should lull. When we got into comparatively smooth water the anchor was cast over the stern, and we could just see the loom of land through the dark night. The ship rocked remarkably comfortably, although it seemed to us a strange method of riding to anchor.

After waiting an hour or more, and the wind having apparently fallen very considerably, we suggested to the captain that we might proceed on our voyage to Oropos. He replied that the gale was blowing even harder than before over the channel at Oropos, and that it was impossible to cross. He coolly spread his rug, as did his mate, on the only comfortable part of the ship and went to sleep, without light or any signal to show that there was a ship at anchor. We had taken shelter in the small hold when the wind rose to half a gale and the decks were washed with a breaking sea. The ballast was gravel, and had there been room to stretch one's legs fairly one might have obtained a little sleep, for gravel makes not a bad mattress if covered with a rug. The cramped position and an ever-recurring shower precluded rest, and it was with no small measure of relief that we watched the approach of dawn. The crew shook themselves, leisurely proceeded to lift the anchor, set the sail,

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and made for Oropos, which we found was literally only half-an-hour's run. The truth was that the astute sailors were not sure of the coast, as their fishery was round the other side of the great island of Eubœa, and they did not care to run into Oropos in the dark.

Whether it was the contrast from the rough, dark night to the calm, fresh morning, I do not know, but I thought I had never seen a prettier village than Oropos, with its handsome cruciform church, shaded by wonderful plane-trees. At first there was no one astir, but our dragoman found the proprietor of the village store, where we were by and by furnished with hot milk and coffee, which was most refreshing after the night's cramped and wet tossing. A spring-cart was engaged, and in an hour we were making our way across the Parnes towards Athens. I afterwards learned that we only secured this conveyance by the mendacious statement of our dragoman that we were foreign officers carrying despatches for the King, and must be assisted in our journey.

I am afraid we were too weary to thoroughly enjoy the superb views which are obtained in the long zigzag climb of the Parnes range and through the magnificent forest of Tatoi and the vineyards of Decleceia. The horses had to be given rest for an hour at Tatoi, and we walked through the

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garden, past the royal villa, the summer residence of the King of Greece, to the pretty little inn built by his Majesty for the use of excursionists from Athens to this lovely neighbourhood. After a grateful rest, we resumed our journey and reached Athens at two o'clock. I drove at once to the telegraph office, and handed in my despatches with a sigh of relief and satisfaction that mine were the first long messages to be received. I had been five days and four nights without having my clothes or even my boots off, and it was with something of contented satisfaction at duty done that I sought immediate repose in the exquisitely comfortable precincts of the Hotel d'Angleterre.

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CHAPTER XII

A GLIMPSE INTO ATHENIAN POLITICS

ON my arrival at Athens there was a Ministerial crisis. A scapegoat had to be found for the disastrous events of the past few days. M. Delyannis, the Premier, had committed the unpardonable sin of failure in his policy, and there was a universal cry for his dismissal. It would be difficult for me to say whether Delyannis was more the victim of circumstances than of a carefully designed scheme of policy. Perhaps he never really meant war, but only to pander to the popular excitement and demand for a crusade against the hated Turk. For undoubtedly the public, at any rate of Athens, cried "war" until they were hoarse. In so fiercely democratic a country as Greece is, it is perhaps necessary for a Minister, if he love power and desire to retain it, to bow before a storm of popular opinion and to swim with the flowing tide. It may be that Delyannis had an idea of playing

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with the Powers of Europe, and the Porte, with the gambler's hope that the game would result in his favour. He knew that every one of the Governments in the Concert of Europe was passionately anxious to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, since it was difficult to foresee how far the war might spread if once the first shot were fired, and how many nations it would involve. He thought, perhaps, that by active preparations for war, and by a tacit encouragement of the no doubt patriotic, but still hysterical, ravings of the Ethniké Etairia, he might attain that which, truly enough, all Greek nationalists desired—the union of Crete to the Fatherland, and the rectification of the frontier on the mainland so as to include Epirus in the kingdom, as had been intended by the Berlin Congress of 1878. The Powers, he conceived, would compel the Porte, willy-nilly, to make these concessions rather than allow the flames of war to break out.

If these were his calculations, they were sadly at fault; and he had to pay the bitter penalty of the humiliation of dismissal from office. Little more than three weeks before he had declared to the Chamber of Deputies in Athens that everything had been prepared for a war with Turkey. The boast was as vain as that of Le Bœuf to Napoleon III. in 1870, that the French army was ready for a war with Germany down to the last gaiter-button. The

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declaration of war by the Sultan of Turkey was forced by the ostentatious concentration of troops on the Thessalian frontier, and by the raids organized by the National Society into Macedonia and Epirus. In a seven days' campaign the Greek army had been crumpled up like paper before a fierce flame, and its remnants had been compelled to fall back before a victorious invader, in order to take some measures for re-organization.

Preparations for a serious campaign do not simply consist in a collection of a certain amount of obvious war materials, such as gunpowder, shells, rifles, cartridges, etc. Vast reserves of these must be provided, and of clothing to replace waste. Depôts for food must be established, and a very elaborate system of commissariat must be organized. As the Duke of Wellington said, an army marches and fights on its stomach, and a hitch in the commissariat jeopardizes the success of the most carefully-prepared plan of campaign. Now, scarcely one of these first necessities of modern warfare had been attended to.

Until the beginning of hostilities, almost no preparation had been made to resist a possible invasion of Thessaly. True, a few trenches had been dug in front of Larissa, and one or two minor earthworks thrown up. But literally, not until after war had been declared by Turkey had a spade been

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turned to erect batteries and connecting earthworks for the defence of the exits of the passes, by which invading Turkish troops could debouch into the Thessalian plain at half-a-dozen places. What preparations had been made—and these, as the event showed, were perfunctory—were for an invasion into Macedonia and the triumphal march to Salonica!

A military expert who visited a greater part of the frontier at different centres, where serious preparations for a campaign might have been expected to have been manifest, told me, what indeed I had already observed for myself, that at one chief arsenal in charge of a colonel of artillery, there were fewer than fifty cases of shells, and one battery of field-guns, and one of mountain-guns in reserve. The principal depôt for feeding the army of Thessaly from the base with ammunition, consisted of not more than 1200 rounds of shells, and a few hundred cases of cartridges.

In the neighbourhood of Athens there is a very good powder factory, but no machinery exists for the manufacture of cartridge-cases, which have to be imported. After a week's active operations in the field there arose an imperative demand for rifle ammunition which it was difficult, if not impossible, to supply. Many hundreds of thousands of cartridge-cases were under order from Austria, but no

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one could discover at the critical moment where they were. It was alleged that the Austrian Government had put difficulties in the way of the direct shipment of the cartridge-cases from Trieste to Piræus, and they had actually to be sent by some round-about method all through Austria, Germany, and Belgium to Antwerp, before they could be forwarded to Greece. Then, too, it was alleged that gun ammunition had all but run out in less than a fortnight after it had begun to be used, and a Scotch foundry at Piræus had to be commissioned to embark on an altogether new and highly specialized business, and cast shells in haste.

During my brief stay in the capital, I was credibly informed that there were 18,000 Reservists and exempted men of the 1885-6 classes called to the colours. They were wandering about the streets in their oldest civilian dress. They had come full of enthusiasm, expecting to be provided not only with arms but with uniforms. There were no uniforms, and not indeed any cloth wherewith to make them. The Government vainly applied to private merchants for khaki, serge, and other stuffs with which to make uniforms, and it became necessary to await the arrival of material from the different centres of supply in Europe.

There were, it was stated with apparent authority, no rifles in the Government stores. The very week

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of my arrival in Athens the Government had applied to private merchants to sell them some. Two hundred thousand rifles of the old Gras pattern, which had been discarded from the French army some years ago, had been imported by a few speculators, and were being sold at *7s. 6d.* each to members of the National Society. The inability of the Government to provide the recruits with rifles led to riots on April *27, 28.* The recruits went down to the business quarter of Athens, and broke open gunsmiths', ironmongers', and other shops where arms were likely to be held in stock, and appropriated whatever weapons they could lay their hands on. At Patras a French steamer had arrived with a cargo of old Gras rifles, and commenced to discharge the cases into a lighter. The lighter was seized by the mob, the cases broken open, and the rifles distributed amongst themselves.

On Tuesday afternoon and evening the excitement in streets and squares was very great. A revolution seemed inevitable. Crowds rushed about the neighbourhood of the Palace shouting in a frantic manner. Photographs and pictures of the King and Royal Family were openly torn up in the streets. At Piræus a mob went round the town and tore down from shop-fronts the insignia of Royal Arms; and in the cafés, where the Royal Family

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had been a favourite decoration, the pictures were either slashed or their faces turned to the wall. In the business quarter the majority of the shops for two or three days remained closed, or had only their doors open.

The guard for the Palace that afternoon refused to turn out of barracks. So serious was the state of affairs that a large number of officers from the war-ships of the Great Powers, which lay at anchor at Phaleron Bay, were landed in plain clothes, but with uniforms in portmanteaux, and drafted up to Athens with instructions to take action for the defence of the Palace and Royal Family, in conjunction with a body of marines and blue-jackets, who were held in readiness to be disembarked from the war-ships at a moment's notice.

In the afternoon the mob, which had armed itself by pillaging the shops in the lower part of the town, collected in University Street. Shots were fired in the air at intervals, and an *émeute* seemed imminent. M. Ralli, the leader of the Opposition, and deputy for Attica, appeared on the scene in a carriage, accompanied by M. Petrolokas, the member for Laconia. They harangued the crowd, and advised the people to quietly disperse to their homes, as they were going to see the King, and insist on a change of Ministry. They had an interview with his Majesty, who agreed that a meeting

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of the Chamber should be called for the following day.

The Greek Chamber consists of 207 members, but the quorum necessary for a legal sitting is 105. Many deputies were absent from Athens, and of forty officers who were members twenty were at the front.

Curiosity took me to the Chamber to see the proceedings. There was no quorum at the morning sitting on Wednesday, and in the afternoon only ninety-five members answered the roll-call, so that both sittings were abortive, and the Chamber, adjourned until Thursday. It was whispered that Delyannis' party had no desire to form a quorum, or do anything to assist in their own downfall. Hence their supporters absented themselves. The leading members of the Opposition met on Thursday morning in the very handsome library of the Chamber, and appointed a deputation to seek an audience of the King. His Majesty received the deputation, and commissioned M. Ralli to form a new Government. At five in the afternoon the Chamber again met, but on this occasion the supporters of M. Ralli were in no hurry to put in an appearance until he had been able to form his Cabinet.

The Chamber is a very handsome room, semicircular in form; very much indeed after the

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pattern of the ancient Grecian theatre. The space between the platform, where the Speaker and the Clerks of Parliament sit, together with the official reporters of the debates, is a bay between two magnificent marble pillars which support a fine panelled ceiling. There are galleries in the semi-circle to which the public seemed to be freely admitted, and on the slightly rising floor of the House each deputy is provided with a small desk. There is little dignity, however, in the meeting, when contrasted with that of the House of Commons, or even with the Legislative Chambers of the British Colonies. The Speaker has no distinguishing robe, and the officials seemed to exercise their own fancy as to the attire in which they might appear. I am sorry I did not see the Chamber in full session, and witness for myself the manner in which a single-chamber Legislature conducts its business.

When the new Government was formed, I called upon the Prime Minister, M. Ralli. He has a clear-cut, clean-shaven, and rather striking face; with a mobile mouth. His manner is concentrated energy itself, and there is a tone of conviction in his rapid speech. Altogether his is a striking personality. I also saw M. Skouloudis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He, too, is a man of striking appearance. In contrast with M. Ralli, he is calm, sedate, and

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grave. Full in face, and with whiskers which are silvery, he seemed to me more of the true Greek type than any other public man I had seen.

Before finally deciding on their policy, which generally speaking was peace on honourable terms, the new Government determined to send two of their members, M. Tsamathos, Minister for War, and M. Theotoki, Minister of the Interior, to the head-quarters of the Crown Prince at Pharsala, in order to see and judge for themselves how matters really stood at the seat of war. The Head-quarters Staff had also undergone considerable modification by the resignation of several of its members, and the appointment of Colonel Smolenskis as Chief of the new Staff.

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CHAPTER XIII

VELESTINO AND PHARSALA

ON Friday evening, April 30, I left Piræus on board the steamer *Anatolie* for Volo, in order to return to the front. The ship was filled with troops, and there were the usual discomforts of a crowded cabin and deck. The only remarkable thing about the voyage was the volubility with which the captain—a typical old Greek salt—delivered patriotic orations whenever he could find an audience, and when the navigation of the ship left him free. At Chalcis there was a rumour that a battle had been fought the previous day, and that the Greeks had gained a glorious victory. Knowing something of these rumours, I was inclined to discount the news, but really hoped it was true, although I was chagrined, professionally, to think that I had missed so important event as that would imply.

We arrived at Volo on Sunday morning, to find

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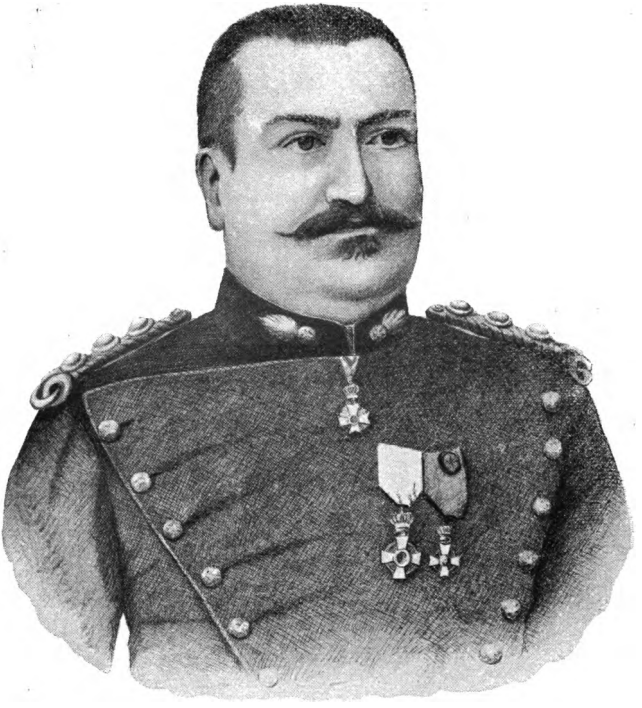

COLONEL SMOLENSKIS

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in the outer roadstead a large fleet of war-vessels, comprising the whole of the Eastern Division of the Greek fleet, and French, German, Italian, and British gun-boats.

My dragoman met me on the quay and confirmed the news of a battle on the Friday at Velestino. He further informed me that the first necessity would be the purchase of new horses. Five or six days before, he had been asked by some of the leading inhabitants of Volo to move up country towards Larissa, in order to make a reconnaissance, as it were, as to the real position of the Turks, and as to whether Volo was likely to be invaded by them at once. He had undertaken the commission, and got as far as Gerli, where he was attacked, not by Turks, but by a band of Greek brigands, prisoners who had escaped from one or other of the jails during the disorganization of the civil administration of Thessaly. He was deprived of watch, money, every valuable in fact in his possession, and told to dismount. His horse being thus appropriated, he had to make the best of his way back to Volo on foot, thankful that he had not been murdered. There was a spice of humour in the fact that two days afterwards in a suburb of Volo he met one of the brigands offering for sale my English saddle and bridle, and he repurchased my property for a fifth of its value.

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After some search we found a couple of horses, and a start was at once made for Velestino, where Colonel Smolenskis was in position with the right wing of the Greek army, charged with the defence of the railway junction, by which reinforcements and supplies were forwarded on to Pharsala, and the pass which leads over the mountains, which separates the Gulf of Volo from the Thessalian plain.

We reached Velestino early in the afternoon, and I made an inspection of the position, obtaining some information, at the same time, regarding the action on the previous Friday.

It appears that on the morning of that day a Turkish force of not less than 8000 strong, including a cavalry division, marched from the direction of Larissa and the Vale of Tempe down both shores of Lake Karla. Those on the east shore of the lake were ferried across in boats and landed near the village of Risomylos, the literal meaning of which is "Rice-mill." Here they joined the Larissa division, which had marched during the earlier hours of the morning from Gerli, and they made a conjoint demonstration against the Greek positions.

If I may be permitted to say so without offence, General Smolenskis has the instincts of a strategist as well as being a bold and skilful general in

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action. One always felt that wherever he had charge, his troops were disposed as they ought to be to make the most either for defence or offence.

The railway from Volo to Velestino cuts about the centre of an almost circular valley, which runs at the north end into the Thessalian plain. It thus forms a bow, with the village and monastery of St. George about the middle of the arc, the railway being the string, and Velestino, with Mount Karadaon, the western horn, and Mount Uvrids Ghala the eastern horn. These horns formed the right and left flanks of the Greek position. Stretching between them, north of the railway line, the 5th and 11th Regiments of Infantry were intrenched, the centre being a low mound with strong earthworks and a battery of artillery. The second line was just south of the railway. Rifle-pits connected four of those mounds which are so characteristic of the Thessalian plain, and which one can hardly say are artificial or natural. A couple of batteries of field and mountain artillery were stationed on the left and the centre. The reserve of infantry and a battery of artillery were camped in front of the monastery of St. George.

The Turkish advance was well screened by the woods enveloping the village of Risomylos, but the attack or demonstration was mainly directed

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against the horns of the bow I have described—Karadaon, to get possession of Velestino railway station; and Uvrids Ghala, which practically commands the pass to Volo. The Turks were strong in cavalry and infantry, but weak in artillery. The division which attacked Uvrids Ghala was unsupported by artillery, but advanced to the attack of the Greek lines, which were aligned with great skill on the face of the precipitous hillside. The Turks were met by a galling fire from the Greek lines, which were well protected by extemporized earthworks, and from a mountain-battery which had been planted on the shoulder of the mountain. Again and again the Turkish infantry, although driven back, returned to the assault, and it was not until the afternoon that they finally withdrew.

On the Greek left, that is at Velestino and on the Karadaon ridge, the Turkish attack was made with equal persistence, supported in this instance by a battery of mountain artillery. Smolenskis had placed a battery of mountain-guns on a plateau overlooking the village of Velestino, and along the base of this plateau was a battalion of Evzones, sheltered by the position of the ground and by intrenchments. The battery on the plateau played on the Turkish advance with great effect, and the order was given by the Turkish

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THE BATTLE OF VELESTINO: APRIL 30TH. THE TURKISH CAVALRY CHARGE ON THE PLATEAU BATTERY

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commander to charge it. The Turkish infantry swung clear, and the cavalry led by a young officer came on in column, first at the trot, and then at a swinging gallop. It seemed a mad undertaking for cavalry to charge a battery of well-served artillery planted on the crest of a long steep slope. The brave horsemen were met with salvoes of shells which ploughed through their ranks. Then suddenly uprose the Evzones from their partially hidden cover and poured upon them volley after volley. No troops could withstand such fire; and completely broken, the Turkish horsemen turned and sought shelter in the woods in the neighbourhood of Risomylos. The whole Turkish force withdrew at nightfall to Gerli.

It was a smart victory for Smolenskis, and inspired the Greek troops with a new spirit. The Turkish losses in killed and wounded numbered over 1200, and the Greek officer who had been in charge of the burying parties told me that he had interred during the Saturday and Sunday between 600 and 700 Turkish dead, many of whom had been partially clothed in the Greek uniforms which had been captured in the Larissa stores. In various parts of the field, he said, 400 dead horses had been found, and already the air was redolent from the carcases seething in the fierce sun. Twenty riderless horses had also been captured.

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In riding over the position, I found that the Greek officers were momentarily expecting an attack by the Turkish army. . Away in the direction of Risomylos and by the shores of Lake Karla we could see with our glasses large numbers of Turkish troops in motion, with a body of cavalry working towards Uvrids Ghala. Their movements seemed to indicate as if the Turkish General had some intention of turning the Greek right, and endeavouring to come round on Volo by two roads, one along the shore of Karla lake, and another higher up the slope of the hill to the mountain village of Kupurna. From the latter place paths lead round and over the lower spurs of Pelion and converge on Volo.

Such an advance had been foreseen by Colonel Smolenskis, and he had planted a mountain-battery on the highest ridge overlooking these roads; and a force of 3000 men, mainly consisting of the 7th Regiment, occupied the surrounding heights and valleys. The Turkish cavalry, whose movements were indicated by the moving line of dust on the lake-side, had evidently discovered the preparations made for an advance in that direction, and they withdrew northward in the afternoon. About midday a skirmish between the outposts took place on the edge of the wood in front of Risomylos, in which the Turks lost ten killed and

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several prisoners. Although we waited in patient expectation the general attack which in the forenoon had seemed so imminent, no further movement was made by the Turkish General. At the approach of evening Risomylos was seen to break into flame and smoke, and under cover of this characteristic Turkish proceeding, the whole Turkish army withdrew in the direction of Gerli. I then rode back to Volo.

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CHAPTER XIV

VELESTINO AND PHARSALA (*continued*)

CAMP "shaves" are notoriously unreliable, and it was difficult to believe one which ran like wildfire through Volo, early on Monday morning (May 2), that an armistice had been proclaimed, and that the war was practically at an end. But a Paris Correspondent who was living at the French Consulate, assured me he had seen and read an official telegram from the Minister in Paris to the French Consul, stating that an armistice had been arranged, and that there was little probability of more fighting. On inquiry, I learned that the British Consul had had no such communication. That, however, was no proof that the news might not be true.

I rode out in the forenoon to Velestino, and certainly there were no indications in any part of the plain, or at the village, of the imminence of the great battle which everybody expected on Sunday

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night, and for which preparations had been carefully made by Colonel Smolenskis. The Greek troops still held their positions, stretching from Uvrids Ghala to Karadaon, and both the first and second lines of defence had apparently been reinforced. Arms were, however, piled, and the guns in the batteries were covered. The men were in free and easy disarray, which hardly fitted with the prospect of a momentary attack by a resolute enemy.

Approaching Velestino, the first news I heard was that the Turks had fallen back on Hadzi-Misi and Gerli; that Greek scouts had early that morning entered Risomylos. I met several peasants who were on their way to Volo, and interviewed them through my dragoman. They said they had gone that morning back to their homes in Risomylos. Three-fourths of the houses in the village had been burned, and all of them had been looted. The church had not been consumed, although an effort had evidently been made to set it on fire. The interior was wrecked, and the sacred icons or pictures had been destroyed. All the oxen and sheep belonging to the village, and the last head of poultry had been taken away. At the Velestino railway station there was a detachment of 400 sailors, who had left the fleet in Volo Bay at six o'clock in the morning, amid enthusiasm and a

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wild *feu de joie.* They seemed listlessly wondering why they had been brought there. In the afternoon they were sent back to Volo by train, and returned to their ships.

I spoke with many officers in different parts of the field. They expressed unreserved admiration for the brilliant charge which the Turkish cavalry had made against the plateau-battery the previous Friday, when they were literally mowed down by the Greek artillery. No less hearty was their admiration of the determined assault of the Turkish infantry on the precipitous slopes of Uvrids Ghala. Naturally they also praised the bravery of their own men in repelling, for many hours under the most trying circumstances, the Turkish advance.

The truth had been burned into the soul of many of these Greek officers. When informed that an armistice was probable, a few murmured banalities about being betrayed, but the majority frankly, if sorrowfully, recognized not only that they were far out-numbered by the Turkish army, but that however brave and noble the Greek troops might be—which they quietly assured you they are—they were and are unprepared for a long campaign. The bitterness of the defeat at Mati, the stampede to Larissa, and the hurried withdrawal to Pharsala without an attempt to defend the position at Larissa, had to some extent been compensated by

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their victory on Friday at Velestino. Honour had been saved, and peace would be gladly welcomed.

It was astonishing to find many officers admitting now the looseness of discipline prevailing in the Greek army taken as a whole, and that large numbers of the irregulars and undrilled armed peasants, even though these are inspired with patriotic enthusiasm, are a positive danger instead of an assistance in the regular operations of modern warfare. The methods and traditions of guerilla fighting are of little or no account against a disciplined army, even if composed of Anatolian semi-barbarians, directed by generals who have mastered the tactics of the game of war.

There was actually nothing doing the whole day, and I rode back to Volo as the night was closing in. An incident happened on the journey which shows that danger is not confined to the battle-field. In climbing the Velestino side of the pass by the old paved Roman road, I had gone on four or five hundred yards in advance of my dragoman, and was beginning the descent, when I observed three men a couple of hundred yards away, amongst some rocks a little distance from the road. One of them raised his rifle and fired, and the bullet passed unpleasantly close to my head. I immediately pulled up my horse and waited the arrival of my dragoman, who had heard the shot, and asked me

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whence it had come. I pointed to the three men, and he laconically said, "Brigands." For the first time in the campaign I unbuttoned the flap of my revolver-case and drew my weapon. My dragoman did the same. The best thing for it was to charge the miscreants. As we approached one of them bolted, but the other two remained, and came towards us carrying their rifles at the shoulder. When we came up to them my dragoman immediately demanded an explanation of their firing, and their reply was that they had been firing at a bird! My dragoman said they deserved to be shot, and that he had a mind to take them into Volo as prisoners, and hand them over to military authority. They begged to be let go, and as I had no desire to be delayed or involved in a useless prosecution, I advised them to reserve their shots for the Turks, and pushed on.

When we reached the shoulder of the last hill which leads down into the valley of Volo, and from which the first view of the harbour is obtained, we could see the Greek war-ships flinging their search-lights all over the face of Pelion high above the town. This they continued to do for hours; and on asking for an explanation on arriving at Volo, I learned that rumours had prevailed that Turkish cavalry had been seen on the roads leading from Kupurna and Macrynica. The truth, however,

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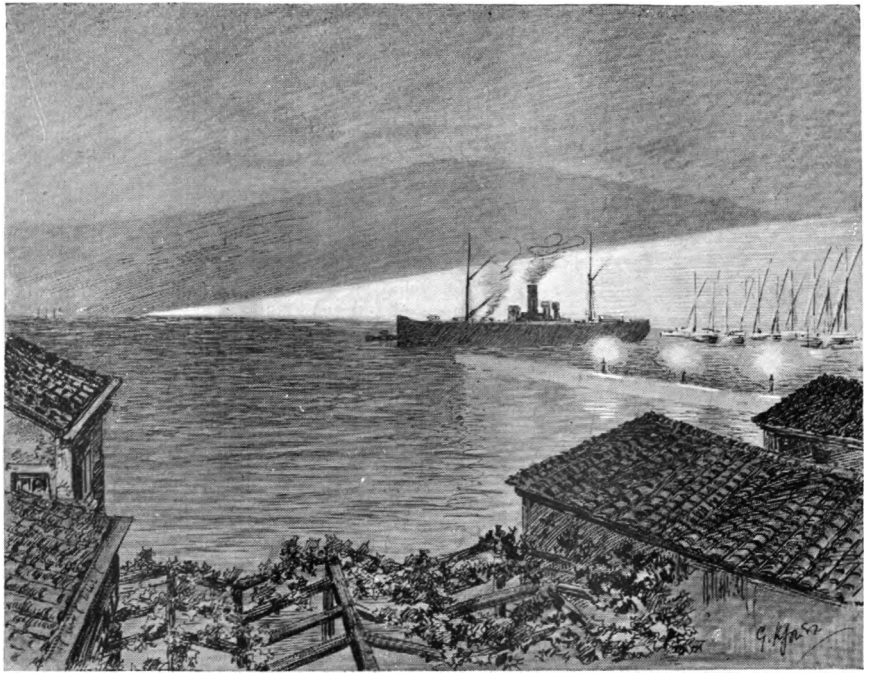

WAITING FOR THE TURKS: THE GREEK SQUADRON PLAYING ON PELION WITH SEARCH LIGHTS

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was that the horsemen observed were only flying peasants, many of whom I had myself noticed away to our left in the direction of Pelion, a few miles before we came to Volo.

After dinner that evening, in the restaurant of the Hôtel de France, which had been made the head-quarters of the majority of the Correspondents, and was also frequented by many Greek officers, I had a conversation with an officer whom I understood, if he did not in fact represent himself, to be one of the aides-de-camp on the Head-quarters Staff. He was naturally much interested in what I had told him regarding the very definite statement emanating from the French Consulate of an agreement for an armistice, and informed me that the Crown Prince would be glad to see me at his head-quarters at Pharsala. I accordingly determined to go to Pharsala the following morning unless something happened in the interval at Velestino. The next morning I took train for Velestino, and found there all quiet. The Greek army remained exactly in the positions which they had occupied since the previous Friday, and the report was that the Turkish army had withdrawn still further in the direction of Larissa. I met a young engineer-officer, who said that he had made a reconnaissance in a locomotive up the railway-line a considerable distance past Gerli, and that he had

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observed no Turkish troops. The permanent way of the railway was intact.

I made up my mind to go on to Pharsala, and joined a train which was going thither with reinforcements of troops and stores of bread and biscuit. The line passes at the base of the plateau, on the summit of which was the battery that had been charged by the Turkish cavalry in the last engagement. The troops on the plateau and on the south side of the line for the defence of the village were at ease, and nothing indicated an anticipation of active hostilities. The railway ascends in a series of curves to the top of the pass between the Mavrovouni and the Tsiraghi-sotika ranges, and then descends into the plain of Pharsala. It was on the slopes of Mavrovouni, the literal meaning of which is Black Mountain, that the great battle between the Romans under Quintus Flaminius, and the Greeks under Philip V. of Macedon, was fought in the year 197 B.C., and I could not help wondering at the changed methods of warfare since that far-gone time and now. I recollected that my school history had told me that the battle between the Greeks and Romans had been equally waged for the livelong day, and that victory finally declared itself for the Romans, after an irresistible charge of elephants upon the Macedonian troops!

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We reached Pharsala railway station about noon, to find it converted into a small fortress. In front of the building were breastworks of earth and stone. The windows had been cleared of their glass frames, and the spaces filled up with railway sleepers, which were loop-holed for rifles. On either side of the railway station was a long line of intrenchments. The reason for this was presently observed. The roadway from the railway station to the town of Pharsala, two miles distant, is carried on a high embankment, the ground on each side being low, and in winter-time an impassable morass. An attack on Pharsala, therefore, could only be accomplished with the command of the road. Half-a-mile from the town large numbers of Greek troops were in bivouac, and as we passed they were roasting over their camp-fires whole sheep for the mid-day meal.

I made my way to the Crown Prince's head-quarters, which were in the east quarter of the town, close by an ornate Turkish mosque. His Royal Highness was reposing, so I was informed; but if I would wait he would see me shortly. In the meantime I had an interview with Colonel Sapoŭnyaki, who told me that they had no news of an armistice, although they were in direct telegraphic communication with Athens and the Government there. He rather astonished me

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during the conversation on the events of the previous fortnight, by saying that he never could understand why the Greek army had retreated from their position at Mati, or who had given the order for the retreat! That the chief of the Prince's staff should make this amazing statement was to me past comprehension. He added that the Turkish army had approached within ten miles of Pharsala, and that there had been a skirmish between their and the Greek outposts the previous day (Monday) at Karditza, and another between Pharari and Trikkala. The Turks then began to retire, and had evacuated Trikkala, on which a Greek force of 1200 men had re-occupied that town.

I waited for two hours, but as his Royal Highness remained invisible, I left the head-quarters for the purpose of making an inspection of the position at Pharsala. The town is built on broken ground at the northern base of the Kassidiari hills, which here rise to a height of over 3800 feet. The enormous walls of the ancient city are still visible in their ruins over a large part of a circuit of four miles. The Acropolis stands on an isolated hill within a circuit of ancient defences, and is capable of being strongly fortified, even against the engines of modern warfare. But the position is tactically weak, since it could be turned

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on both the right and the left by roads which would bring an enemy to the rear.

I had meant to return to Velestino in the afternoon, but on going to the railway station found that the train, which in ordinary course would have run to Velestino, had been forwarded to Trikkala with rations and ammunition. I was therefore compelled to walk back to Pharsala, and seek quarters for the night. I made my way to a café, while my dragoman went in search of a sleeping-place, and was there joined by Mr. Maud, the artist of the *Graphic*, who had come with me in the morning from Volo. The café and the streets adjoining were thronged with soldiers, and food was not to be got for love or money. Black coffee was the only refreshment procurable. While we were sipping a cup of this decoction, a string of seven wretches, bound from arm to arm with strong ropes, marched past us under a strong guard. We were informed that they were spies and brigands caught red-handed; and I may add that they were tried that evening by summary court-martial and hanged.

Maud and I wandered about the crowded streets, wondering what we should do for a square meal, as we had had nothing but a small piece of lamb which we had brought with us from Volo, and which, with a tin of sardines, had constituted our

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lunch seven hours before. Happily we ran across my old companion Lieutenant Wester, who had joined the Head-quarters Staff after the retreat from Larissa. The meeting was a pleasant one, and he provided finally that we should not starve. He was messing in an unoccupied house with several Swedish officers attached to head-quarters. They had dined, but there had been left the best part of a duck, which was handed over to us to make the groundwork of a supper. Wrapping the duck in a piece of paper, we joyfully departed from Wester's quarters in search of our dragoman.

Turning the corner of one of the narrow streets, our hearts bounded to see the folds of a British flag floating from a staff raised above a low wall on the crest of a mound. "Hurra!" I said, "this must be Williams' camp." And we charged up that mound with glee and round the flank of the breasting wall. There was a tent, and beside it a fire, near which sat the veteran war correspondent. Mr. Williams received Maud and myself with cordiality, and amongst his first words were "Have you had dinner?" He knew the scarcity of provisions and the difficulty of obtaining rations of any kind. His servant, however, that morning had been able to purchase a lamb, and a quarter of it was still left. Zola was summoned and ordered to cut up some portions of the lamb. Mr.

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Williams himself seized a frying-pan, and with the skill of an old campaigner, began at once to fry the savoury tit-bits for our evening meal. In the meantime my dragoman appeared and reported that he had found sleeping-quarters for Maud and myself. Moreover he had brought with him a loaf of army bread and a large flagon of the native wine. We were in clover. A veritable table was spread at the mouth of the tent, a lantern was lit, for it was now quite dark, and in a few minutes, what with Mr. Williams' *hors-d'œuvre* of fried lamb and Lieutenant Wester's cold duck, washed down by the resinous wine, we made a princely meal.

Pipes were lit and the position of affairs discussed. Mr. Williams did not believe in an armistice. The Turks, he thought, would not be content until they had possession of the whole of Thessaly. At any rate there would be one more battle before Pharsala, and probably another at Domokos, which he thought the strongst defensive position in the whole of Greece.

But war news was *caviare* to us, and as the night wore on the conversation drifted into reminiscences of the past, not of previous campaigns in which we had taken part, nor even of the great battle which had been fought in 48 B.C., between Cæsar and Pompey, on the plain just at our feet,

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near to the modern railway station, and which must have been viewed by Cæsar from a point only a few yards from where we were sitting. Our talk drifted into mutual reminiscences as to a visit which Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, made to Glasgow as Lord Rector of the University, when he delivered his rectorial address to the students, and a series of speeches at festive functions. In this extraordinary but very enjoyable fashion the night wore on. Maud and I, guided by our dragoman, sought the house where we were to stay for the remainder of the evening, and we did not dream in bidding our kindly host good-bye that we should not see him again until our reunion in Athens.

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CHAPTER XV

VELESTINO AND PHARSALA (*continued*)

THE house to which we were taken was in the immediate neighbourhood of the head-quarters of the staff. The ground-floor was crowded with soldiers, and we had to step over their forms to reach an open staircase leading to the second floor, which was occupied by the family. A second stair carried us to the top flat, where a very comfortable shake-down was provided for us. In the morning the good lady of the establishment brought us coffee and sweets, and in leaving she absolutely, but politely, refused reward for our entertainment. Our morning meal consisted of a piece of army bread, and we once more made our way to the railway station along the high embanked road. The troops on the plain were falling in, but there was then no suggestion that a battle was near at hand.

I was anxious to return to Velestino, because I

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conceived that the most important operations would take place in that direction. A few troops were in the train, which started at half-past eight, and the run was made smoothly for half the distance, when a stop was made at Aivali. A thunderstorm was raging away to the north-west among the mountains, but between the rolls of thunder I could hear the boom of guns muffled by distance. Every soul in the train leaped out and ran up to an adjoining rising ground to see in what direction the firing of guns came from. In fact the firing came from both our left and our right. The officer in charge of the train was uncertain what to do. Either to return to Pharsala or to speed on to Velestino might lead us right into the arms of the enemy. For quite three-quarters of an hour he was undecided, but upon representations we made he gave the order to go ahead. The boom of the cannon became louder and louder as we came near Velestino, sweeping round the curves which make the descent close by the village into the plain. The Greek troops were in no easy disarray at their posts, as had been the case on the previous day, but standing to arms; and away on the left we could already see the white puffs of smoke from mountain-guns which the advancing Turks were firing against the northern slopes of Karadaon.

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It was now beyond doubt that the rumours of an armistice had been only a camp "shave." The withdrawal of the Turkish forces from Gerli on the Greek right, and Trikkala on the extreme left, had only been meant by Edhem Pasha to disguise his strategic movements.

A reconnaissance made by Baron Blixen from the Greek head-quarters at Pharsala on Tuesday afternoon, yielded the information that a Turkish army of at least 10,000 strong was at Karademerzi, half-way between Pharsala and Larissa. This I learned in the railway train from an old acquaintance, Adjutant Robert Sinclair, of the 3rd Nordland Swedish Dragoons, who had come down to Greece to study the campaign, and whom I had formerly met at Larissa and Ravenni. The reason why the locomotive reconnaissance from Velestino towards Larissa had found no Turks till within a comparatively few miles from the latter place was, that they had been sent west by cross-roads to Abdular, Dedergianni, and Gerni.

We began to understand something of the scheme of the new Turkish attack. On their right and the Greek left they had succeeded in drawing a considerable force of Greek troops to Trikkala, and had then sent on a strong division from Karademerzi to Tekke, ten miles north-east from Pharsala, where they engaged the Greek force

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weakened by the occupation of Trikkala. It was the guns of this engagement which we heard on our way by train to Velestino.

It was evident that the Turkish attack from Hadzi-Misi and Risomylos, on the Velestino valley, and the pass to Volo, had in the meantime been abandoned; that Smolenskis' left flank was to be driven in; and that a Turkish force was to advance on Aivali, to cut the railway and isolate Smolenskis' division at Velestino from that of the Crown Prince at Pharsala. Colonel Smolenskis was quick to divine the movement, and he met it by reversing his left flank and strengthening the lines, which he extended along the ridges and slopes of Karadaon. His left flank, therefore, instead of fronting due north as it had done, along with the rest of his line the previous four or five days, fronted to the north-west, and encountered the Turkish advance from the cross-roads through the hills to which I have already referred.

When a Turkish mountain-battery admirably placed on the crest of the ridge of mountains north of, and commanding to some extent, Karadaon, opened fire, it was replied to by the plateau-battery and by another mountain-battery which Smolenskis had placed on the left shoulder of Karadaon.

Between one and two o'clock the Turkish infantry deployed from the heights for an assault on the

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plateau, and opened a fierce fire upon the Greek infantry disposed along the western face of Karadaon. While the cannonade was in progress a heavy thunderstorm broke over the mountain range and the thick rain obscured the movements of the Turks for a time. The noisy pattering of the heavy rain-drops on the dry soil, and amidst the boulders on the hillside, was the occasion of a false alarm. In the obscurity of the rain-curtain some one conceived that he saw and heard the approach of cavalry. The Greek infantry continued to pour volleys in the direction of the Turkish advance, but it was evident that they were wavering. In fact, in a few places, the first line broke and fell back on the second line. But the officers, with great gallantry, got their men well in hand, re-formed the line, and when the rain cleared off they poured such a withering fire upon the Turks that the latter were compelled to fall back across the valley.

For a couple of hours the infantry fire ceased, and proceedings were confined to an artillery duel between the Greek and Turkish batteries. At five o'clock the Turks, who had evidently been reinforced from their base at Larissa, could be seen massing on the mountain-side. They extended in beautiful order for an attack on the Greek left, especially on the plateau and minor hills overlooking the village of Velestino. Their artillery

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did little execution, probably because the range was too great. The infantry came on with disciplined order, discharging volleys with admirable regularity, although apparently without aim, for the bullets rose high in the air, and fell almost harmless on the plain. The Greek infantry, at this point consisting mostly of the 2nd and 8th Regiments, delivered volley after volley, and visibly shook the Turkish line, while the Greek artillery, splendidly served, dropped shell after shell amongst the fezes.

This proved too much for the Turks, who withdrew to the other side of the valley for a time. Again reinforced, they again came on in grand style, regardless of the hail of the Greek fusillade, and the shrapnel delivered from a Greek battery in the hollow. Once more the Turks were obliged to halt, to falter, and then to retire, the slopes being strewn with dead and wounded.

At six o'clock another determined assault was made by the Turks on the Greek position along the series of low hills above Velestino. They had been reinforced by two battalions. The moment was critical, and Colonel Smolenskis, with something of Scobieleff's electric enthusiasm, rode along the lines addressing the Greeks. In short, terse sentences, he told them they must remember the traditions of their race, and fight if need be until

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THE BATTLE OF VELESTINO: MAY 5TH. REPULSE OF THE TURKISH INFANTRY ASSAULT

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the sacred soil of Thessaly had been saturated with their blood. What an inspiration that was! Uniformed soldiers, and men with only bandoliers filled with cartridges, and in their native dress, cheered. They grappled their Gras rifles more firmly; gave another shout, half a gasp and half a responsive determination to do or die. Reckless of the wild, but at times searching shell-fire of the Turkish batteries, the Greek lines fired volleys steadily on the intrepid Turks. Then they left their shelter-trenches and charged the Turks with a will. The Turkish lines quivered for a moment, then turned and retired in confusion to the shelter of the mountain ridges beyond. It was a brilliant success for the Greeks.

At the end of the day the Greek position, at every point, notwithstanding the change of front, was held against a numerically superior enemy. Darkness only interfered with the progress of the battle. The Greeks had vindicated their honour as courageous soldiers; and the judgment of their General in selecting his defensive position was amply justified. The Greeks showed that they possessed soldierly qualities in a high degree, under a leadership adequate to their trust.

General Smolenskis was quite aware that he had not finally disposed of the Turkish army, and that the attack would be renewed in the morning.

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He asked for all the reinforcements that could be sent him from Volo, in order to strengthen his position.

One personal incident of the day I may recount. Not far from the railway station a gentleman approached me in serge suit and wide-awake hat, and said, "Hullo, Rose, who'd have thought of seeing you here?" To which my reply was, "Hullo, Captain Pirie, who'd have dreamt of meeting you here?" He was the member of Parliament for East Aberdeen. An enthusiastic Phil-Hellene, he had come out to Greece to organize at the front the distribution of relief to the wounded and the sick provided from the *Daily Chronicle* Fund. The last time we had met had been in the club at Edinburgh, and neither of us had known of the mission of the other. It was an odd meeting. Himself a distinguished soldier, he was full of admiration for the plucky manner in which the Greeks were standing to their work; but it was characteristic of the gallant captain and earnest politician, that there and then, on a battle-field, the shells flying overhead, he should say, "Look here, Rose; you must come down and address my constituents in the Whitsuntide recess." The address is undelivered as yet.

I returned to Volo by the train which conveyed the wounded. Discussing the situation that night in

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the garden of the Hôtel de France with Adjutant Sinclair, both of us arrived at the conclusion that Edhem Pasha was working his left round by the Gerli road again, although the movement was to a large extent hidden by the woods to the north of Risomylos and by a low ridge of hills. Adjutant Sinclair took his pencil, and on the rough sketch-plan of the field which I had made in my note-book, he drew a line, saying, "The Turks will swing round by Risomylos during to-morrow and attack Smolenskis' centre." He was a true prophet, for that is exactly what happened.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST STAND AT VELESTINO

AT five on Thursday morning, May 6, I sent my dragoman on by road with the horses, with instructions to meet me at the railway station at Velestino, whither I went by a train with the reinforcements for Colonel Smolenskis. The morning was bright, and it was hardly possible to conceive a more picturesque battle-field than that where the Greeks made their last stand in defence of the pass to Volo, and for the possession of the railway to Pharsala. The nearly circular plain is surrounded by low hills, except on the north, where it opens to the expanse of the great Thessalian plain. The waters of Lake Karla sparkled in the morning sunshine, and the snow-covered heights of Ossa and Olympus glistened against an intensely blue sky. To the north-west of Karadaon is a range of hills, which were occupied by the Turks, twelve or fourteen

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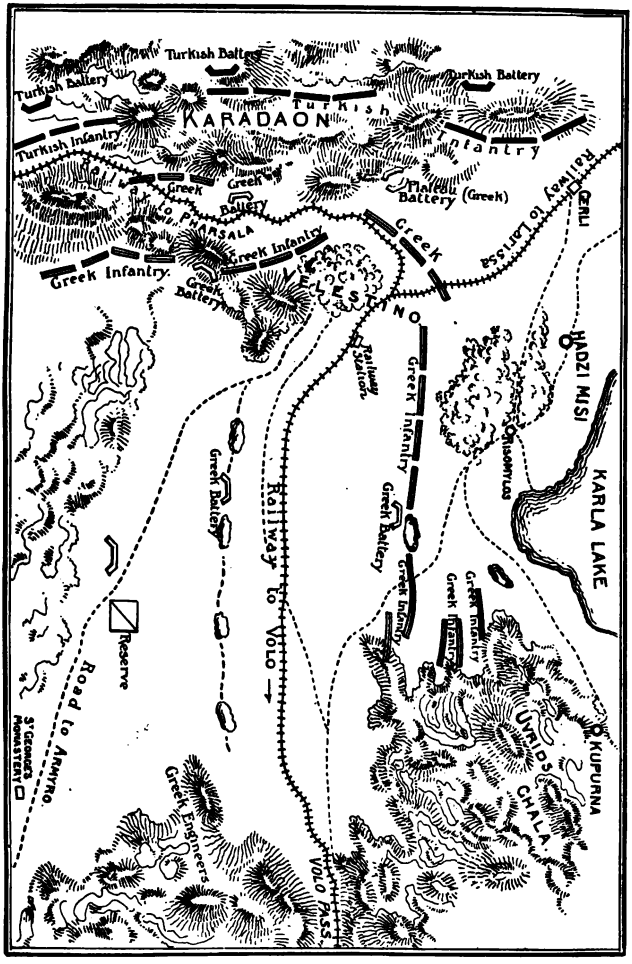

SKETCH PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF VELESTINO: MAY 5TH AND 6TH

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thousand strong. On the crest of the highest peak was a mountain-battery, and a field-battery was planted on the low slope east of the village of Velestino. The Karadaon ridge, which on the west side commands the road to Pharsala, was lined with Greek infantry. On the plateau above Velestino was a battery of field-guns, and on three hills between that and the plain on the east of the village were placed batteries of mountain-guns. On the plain itself, to the north-east of Velestino, was a field-battery which raked the Turkish left advance. The lines across the mouth of the valley, between Karadaon and Uvrids Ghala, were maintained as they had been during the previous four or five days.

The first gun was fired about six o'clock from the Turkish mountain-battery directed against the Greek battery on the plateau; and thereafter there was hot firing all along this position from Karadaon. While the artillery duel was being maintained, we could see the Turkish attack developing on our right, their infantry being extended under cover of a screen of cavalry. At eleven o'clock a fierce assault was made by the Turkish infantry just above the village of Velestino, supported by the fire of a mountain-battery and of a field-battery towards the slope to the plain. The Greek infantry, which were disposed along the crest of the Kara-

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daon ridge, met this advance with a well-sustained fire, and the field-battery to the east of the village showered shells on the Turks with terrible effect. Between eleven and twelve o'clock a determined attempt was made by the Turks to cut the centre of the Geek left-front. At this particular spot the Turks occupied a ridge and the Greeks held a rounded hill separated from the Turkish line by a deep gulch. A hot artillery fire from the Turkish right battery was evidently meant to demoralize the Greek infantry. But the shells fell wide, and comparatively few exploded. Meantime the Greek infantry peppered the Turkish lines with well-directed volleys, and the battery on the plateau played havoc with their splendidly served fire. At a quarter to twelve the Turkish infantry swarmed down from their intrenchments into the gulch, with the intention of charging the Greek position on the hills. They were, however, shattered before they reached the bottom of the valley by the Greek fire, while four shells in succession from the battery on the plateau dropped in their midst, causing great loss. The remnant retreated at a run beyond the ridge which they had previously occupied.

Between twelve and one o'clock the fire slackened, and for a short time ceased altogether along the whole line. At one o'clock occasional shots were

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BATTLE OF VELESTINO: MAY 6TH. REPULSE OF THE TURKISH INFANTRY CHARGE

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heard on the right, but it was on the left that for some time the battle raged most fiercely. The Turkish mountain-battery on the crest of the ridge north of Karadaon was silenced by the Greek plateau-battery, one shell having completely shattered two of the guns. Almost simultaneously with this incident, the Turks on the right were reinforced by two battalions from the direction of Aivali and made a rush on the Greek left round the west shoulder of Karadaon. They swarmed up the slopes in the most resolute manner, and drove back the first line of Greek skirmishers. The Turks brought up another battery of mountain-guns to support this attack, and it played on the second Greek line with some effect, but the latter was strengthened by the supports which were brought up, and the assault of the Turkish infantry was withstood.

At two o'clock the firing again ceased on every part of the field, with the exception of the extreme left, where there was an occasional sputtering of rifle fusillade. The Turkish commander then made that development for which he had been preparing all day, and which Adjutant Sinclair had prophesied the previous evening. Throughout the forenoon I had been keeping my glasses directed away to the right, in the direction of Risomylos, but until the afternoon there was no

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movement of troops which could confirm our theory. During the cessation of firing I rode across Smolenskis' original front, and made my way to the top of an outlying spur of the Uvrids Ghala range, and before I had been there a quarter of an hour I could see Turkish cavalry riding hard along the shore of Karla Lake. On the same line of route, but to the right and towards the Greek position in the plain, was a large artillery train ; while from the folds of the hills above Risomylos and Hadzi-Misi, columns of Turkish infantry were marching with slow persistence. By three o'clock the Turkish artillery unlimbered free of the trees at Risomylos, and opened fire on the Greek centre. The guns were of larger calibre than had yet been brought into action, and followed up by a sustained infantry attack it was not difficult to foretell that the end was near.

By five o'clock the ammunition of the Greek batteries was all but exhausted, and Smolenskis gave instructions for the withdrawal of the artillery on his right over the pass to Volo. While this was being done the Turkish fire from the large field-guns was resumed at a very quick rate, and rendered the village of Velestino untenable, as also the ridges to the west. On the Turks came from the west and the north, in strong divisions

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and before them Smolenskis retired his forces in the best order possible. At half-past seven Velestino was occupied by the Turks and set on fire; the railway was cut, and the defeat of the Greek army was complete.

A few minutes after seven, a train containing 200 wounded men and some fugitives left Velestino station, shortly before the occupation of it by the Turks, and as it passed along the range of the Turkish battery near Risomylos it was saluted with half-a-dozen shells. Although two of these fell perilously near the train, it escaped, and the wounded were safely brought down to Volo. I rode back the whole way through the pass, overtaking on my journey the retreating artillery. The war-ships in the bay flashed their search-lights up the mountain, and as the night was intensely dark this was of great assistance in showing the road, which was in places exceedingly rough, to the gunners.

The Turkish commander contented himself with the possession of Velestino, and the cutting of the railway and of Smolenskis' army in two. He did not follow up his advantage by an immediate pursuit of either of the two wings of his defeated enemy. The left wing, directed by Smolenskis himself, was retired in good order during the night and the following day, on Armyro by way of Persephli. It may be said that, although there were reports

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to the contrary, Smolenskis did not lose a single gun. The right wing, which received orders to retire on Volo, began the retreat in good enough order, but long before they reached the head of the pass order had disappeared. Indeed, in the dense night, the weary march over these rough roads became as disorganized as it is possible to imagine. Happily no panic ensued, and there was nothing in the way of the indiscriminate firing which made the retreat from Tyrnavos to Larissa so terrible. Irregulars on the hills around occasionally blazed away from the mere childish delight in using their weapons, or by way of encouragement, much in the same way that a boy whistles to keep his courage up in passing through a graveyard. But they fired their rifles in the air, not at imaginary pursuing Turks.

It is necessary to say a few words regarding the situation at Pharsala during the two days' fighting at Velestino, in order to connect my own narrative with what followed at Domokos. It will be remembered, after I left Pharsala on the morning of May 5, for Velestino, we heard, when half-way to our destination, firing going on away to the north-west. It has been said that the battle that day in front of Pharsala was totally unexpected on the part of the Turks; that it had been Edhem Pasha's plan merely to manœuvre his divisions into position for a concentrated attack on the morrow, simul-

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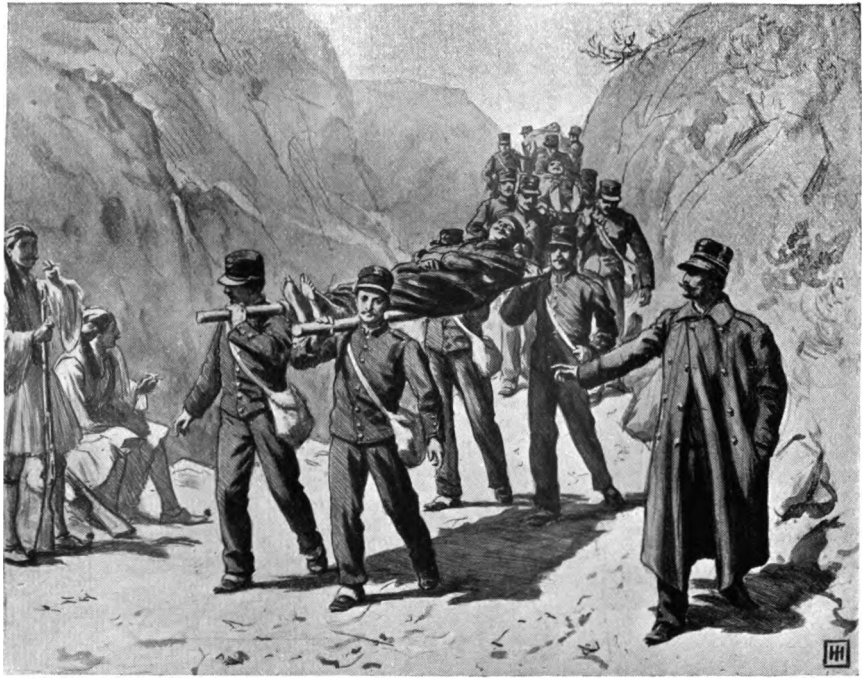

THE BATTLE OF VELESTINO: MAY 6TH. BRINGING THE GREEK WOUNDED TO THE RAILWAY STATION

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taneously with his attempt to crush in Smolenskis' left flank on the 6th, already fully described.

The Turkish advance posts appeared on the heights of Tekke about six miles from the town of Pharsala, and commenced to intrench themselves on the slopes of the hills. The advanced post of the Greeks in this position was a battalion of the 9th Evzones, and the two forces came in contact. The Turks, being the more numerous, drove back the Evzones and took possession of the village of Ordskomi, which, according to their usual practice, they set fire to. With this advantage, the Turkish commander was able to bring up his batteries on to the heights of Tekke and play upon the Greek lines with devastating effect. The Greeks thereupon fell back from what had been a commanding position, their centre having been weakened by the withdrawal of about 1200 men for the useless occupation of Trikkala. In this retirement a single company of infantry remained at its post for a time, and as one correspondent on the Turkish side described it, "fought against heavy odds with magnificent bravery. Being unsupported, its gallant stand was all in vain, and it, too, was obliged to fall back before a steadily advancing enemy." This company was the English section of the Foreign Legion, commanded by Captain Birch, who was wounded in the action, and carried from the field by his own men.

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The plain in front of Pharsala is four or five miles broad, and cut by the railway about the centre. A short distance north of the railway-line is the river Enipeus, crossed by a long bridge of seven or eight pointed arches. As the Greeks retired, which they did in remarkably good order, making short stands at intervals on rising ground, they had to concentrate themselves on the road leading to this bridge. The mobile Turkish artillery followed the retiring columns, and directed heavy fire upon the masses which were converging on to the bridge, causing a considerable loss. An attempt was made to stem the Turkish advance at the village of Vasili, where a strong force of Greeks took a stand behind the shoulder of a hill, and directed a fierce fusillade against the Turkish columns. They, too, however, were overpowered, and along with the English section of the Foreign Legion were amongst the last to cross the bridge. General Macris issued afterwards an order-of-the-day, in which he thanked the Foreign Legion for "the conspicuous gallantry and bravery they displayed in the battle of Pharsala," and "especially the English company for the invaluable assistance rendered by them to the 9th Battalion of Evzones."

Strong as the position at Pharsala seemed to be, it was deemed impossible by the staff to hold it against an enemy numbering three to one, possessing moreover a superiority in number as well

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as range of guns. The order accordingly was given to retreat during the night to Domokos, which was effected in good order, and without the loss of gun or wagon.

From his head-quarters at Domokos the Crown Prince issued the following order-of-the-day :—

"Soldiers of the Greek army! The army has retired on Domokos because our positions at Pharsala were not strong enough, and the enemy was greatly superior in numbers. But the positions which you occupy here are so strong that our army may be considered invincible, and I am confident that you will be able, not only to repulse with success every attack of the enemy, even though he is superior in numbers, but that you will be able shortly to take the offensive, and compel him to abandon Greek territory. Remember that here you defend the sacred soil of the Fatherland and the honour of the King and nation, and that the enemy must not be allowed to make a further step in Greece. I know very well that you have suffered and are suffering from many privations, after having been obliged to fight for many days, but we must endure these privations with patience, in the confidence that we are doing our duty to the Fatherland.

"CONSTANTINOS."

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CHAPTER XVII

THE EVACUATION OF VOLO AND THE FLIGHT TO THE ISLANDS

WHEN the news reached Volo of the defeat of the Greek army, and that the passes were free for the march of the victorious Turk, the town became a scene of wild panic, which was increased by the thousands of peasants who swarmed into the town from the score or more villages which dot the slopes of Pelion. The presence of the Greek fleet, and of English, French, German and Italian gun-boats in the harbour, served to allay the first panic. There were also no fewer than five steamers in the bay, and assurances were sent round by the officials that if only the people would be calm all those who desired to escape could do so. Of course there were numbers of bad characters about, and there was a tendency to loot. It was reported that one or two murders had been committed for the sake of plunder.

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When I went to the telegraph office to see whether it were possible to forward my dispatches, I found that the operators had fled, taking their instruments with them. There was considerable disorder on the quays and in the streets, and that became so great that the British and French Consuls visited the International Fleet in the bay, and requested the Commander to land a joint force of British, Italian, and French marines for the protection of the lives of those who could not get away, and prevent the town being looted by bad characters, even before the arrival of the Turks. Two hundred French sailors were landed, and marched through the principal streets, which tended to calm the excitement. I was told that during the day a hundred strong boxes containing the funds belonging to the Greek Government in Thessaly, which in fact constituted the war-chest, had been brought into the town under escort, and transferred to a Greek battle-ship, for safety and subsequent conveyance to Athens. Late in the evening I took refuge in my old quarters at the Hôtel de France, where I obtained a few hours' much-needed sleep.

Between five and six o'clock in the morning I was roused in common with all the others who had found accommodation on the floors and tables, and in the lobbies of the hotel, for fortunate was he

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indeed who had procured the luxury of a mattress. We were ordered to clear out, as the proprietor intended to close the hotel and batten it up. With some persuasion we were provided with an extempore meal of preserved meat and a bottle of the native wine, and then left, in the hope of obtaining some means of transport, at least to Chalcis. Three of the five steamers which had been in the bay the previous day had already departed, laden with fugitives; and of the remaining two, one was I found destined for the islands, the other it was intended to dispatch to Chalcis.

For hours it was impossible to obtain a boat in which to go out into the bay to join the steamer where it lay at anchor. Hoping to get the use of the cutter of the British Consulate, I proceeded there to find it overrun with anxious fugitives, and Mr. and Mrs. Merlin, with all the good-will in the world, at their wits' end to satisfy the scores who sought the protection of the British flag, and what was regarded as the sacred precincts of the Consulate. At one time I thought of repeating my old experience of reaching down to Eubœa by means of a caïque, but there were not half-a-dozen left in the harbour. Most had sailed with the inhabitants and their belongings, and the few left were already engaged for immediate departure. Some correspondents sought the hospitality of the

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British gun-boat; others went on board the Greek battle-ship. Two or three determined to remain at the British Consulate, and take their chance of safety there on the arrival of the Turkish troops. My anxiety was to get on, and late in the afternoon I, at last, found a boatman who, for a considerable bribe, rowed me out to the last steamer remaining in the harbour, the *Thetis*. I was just in time, for within a quarter of an hour after I got on board, anchor was lifted, and she slowly steamed out into the gulf.

The *Thetis* is a small trading steamer, probably capable of accommodating about one hundred passengers under ordinary circumstances. The condition of the vessel may be easily imagined, when it is stated that at the most modest calculation there were eighteen hundred refugees on board. Hold, deck, hurricane deck, forecastle and saloon were literally packed with human beings, the majority of them in a state of abject terror, and all of them hugging some little thing, precious to them, which they had secured previous to their headlong flight. Fortunately the sea was comparatively calm, but the sufferings of these hundreds of poor people huddled and packed together like herrings in a barrel, can be more easily imagined than described. The patience with which the awful sufferings were endured was beyond all praise. Never an angry

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word was heard, and there were many illustrations of mutual helpfulness under the most trying circumstances. There were several Greek priests on board, and it was beautiful to see the sympathetic respect with which they were treated, and the kindly fatherliness which they showed to the more helpless of the women and children. I found a corner on the bridge, where I obtained some snatches of sleep during the passage to Chalcis, which we reached about six o'clock in the morning.

The first question asked when we got ashore was, "What next?" I did not care to run the risk of the possible delay of a sail to Oropos, and I determined to ride all the way overland from Chalcis to Athens. After considerable negotiation, we found the proprietor of a carriage willing to take the risk of a journey, of course at ransom rates. A start was made about eight o'clock, and after crossing the swing-bridge which spans the Euripos, the narrow strait which separates the mainland from Eubœa, we skirted along the bay in which Agamemnon's fleet was gathered previous to his expedition to Troy, and then began the long ascent of the pass of Anephorites. At the top of the pass we halted for some minutes to rest our horses, and with all our anxiety for dispatch, could not help feasting our eyes on the magnificent panorama spread out at our feet—on the windings

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of the Euripos, the pretty town of Chalcis, and great part of the long mountain ranges of the island of Eubœa.

When our journey was resumed it was over what was little better than a track through uneven downs, on which pastured large flocks of sheep and goats. Between one and two o'clock we reached the village of Skimitari, where we had to halt to give the horses a rest and to obtain for ourselves a meal. Few foreigners evidently come that way, for the inhabitants, to man, woman, and child, turned out to inspect us with friendly curiosity. A little negotiation secured two or three small fowls and a number of eggs. We took laughing possession of what passed for a kitchen, and in a marvellously short time had cooked for ourselves as delicious a meal as could have been provided, in our vain opinion, by the most celebrated *chef* of either London or Paris. Resuming our journey, we passed through Tanagra, a crowded village with narrow, irregular streets, which stands on the site of perhaps the most famous city of ancient Bœotia—the scene of the first great battle between the Athenians and the Spartans, 437 years before the Christian era, and the birthplace of the poetess Corinna, the literary godmother of Pindar. Here too the inhabitants turned out in a body to welcome the strangers, and the head-man, of

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patriarchal mien and beaming face, offered us the simple hospitality of native wine and bread. Nor did the good people disdain to do a little business. The neighbourhood is perfectly covered with ancient tombs, which were re-discovered about five-and-twenty years ago in making some excavations, and from these tombs are collected extraordinary numbers of terra-cotta figures and tear-bottles which have been buried with the dead. The best of these very interesting relics of course have been taken possession of by the Greek Government for the national museum, but the peasants have always a few to sell in a quiet way. As a return for their hospitality we secured two or three specimens for a few drachmas. Five or six miles beyond Tanagra the country became exceedingly attractive, and we wound out and in forests of oak and pine-trees, the latter of which are tapped for the resin with which the native wine is preserved. The afternoon was well spent when we began the ascent of the Parnes range at the junction of the road from Oropos; and thence our journey was over the same road we had previously traversed to Athens, which was reached at half-past ten at night. Again I found I was fortunate enough in being able to hand in at the telegraph-office the first long dispatch.

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CHAPTER XVIII

NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN ARMISTICE—THE HOSPITALS

ATHENS I found to be in a state of subdued repentance. There were to be found a few of what I have called café-politicians—who had not been to the front and never meant to be—who talked big in the streets and squares of "no surrender," of "fighting to the last man," and in other frothy phrases. But serious and responsible men in the capital recognized the logic of facts, lamented in metaphorical sackcloth and ashes the pass to which the fit of wild and unreasonable patriotic enthusiasm, divorced from the most ordinary common-sense calculations, had brought their country. The earnest hope of such was that peace might be secured and a stop put to useless bloodshed, the drain on the productive manhood of Greece, and the threatened ruin of its material resources for many generations to come.

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It was said that the Government were anxious for peace as a result of the visit which M. Tsamathos, Minister for War, and M. Theotoki, Minister of the Interior, paid to the head-quarters of the Crown Prince at Pharsala. The Government addressed a request to the Great Powers asking them to instruct their Admirals in Cretan waters to permit Greek transports to embark the Greek troops which they meant to recall from Crete. If hostilities were to be continued, it was better that these seasoned troops should be in Thessaly rather than in the island. Public opinion accepted the recall of Greek forces from Crete with resignation, and regarded it as a first step towards a reconciliation with Europe and the disarmament even of the antagonism of Germany to the Greek cause. Colonel Vassos had returned to Athens, and although received with respect and a mellowed admiration for his romantic adventures in Crete, he was not made the popular hero he would have been a few weeks before.

The rumours of an armistice were persistent, and the Monday following my arrival in Athens (May 10), M. Skouloudis, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was in frequent consultation with the King and the Prime Minister, and with the German Minister, Baron von Plessen. The staff of the Foreign Office were ordered to remain on

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duty all night, and M. Skouloudis himself stuck to his desk the night long. At half-past four on Tuesday morning, the Secretary to the German Embassy called at the Foreign Office and informed M. Skouloudis that the German Minister had received instructions from his Government to act with the representatives of the other Powers in Athens, and offer their joint mediation between Greece and Turkey. Shortly afterwards, M. Skouloudis was waited upon by M. Onou, the Russian Minister and *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps, who presented the following note :—

"The representatives of France, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, and Austria-Hungary charge M. Onou, the representative of Russia, as senior representative of the Diplomatic Body in Athens, to declare in the name of their respective Governments, as in that of his own Government, that the Powers are ready to offer their mediation with a view to obtaining an armistice and of smoothing the difficulties at present existing between Greece and Turkey, on condition that the Hellenic Government shall declare that it will proceed to the recall of its troops from Crete, that it will adhere formally to autonomy for Crete, and that it accepts without reserve the advice which the Powers will give it in the interest of peace."

M. Skouloudis, on behalf of the Hellenic Govern-

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ment, immediately communicated to M. Onou the following note in reply:—

"The Royal Government, taking note of the declaration of the representative of Russia, acting in the name of the Ministers of the Powers, declares that it is proceeding to the recall of the Royal troops now in Crete, that it formally adheres to autonomy for Crete, and that it places the interests of Greece in the hands of the Powers."

As soon as the reply of the Greek Government had been handed to M. Onou, the decision was telegraphed to the Ambassadors of the Great Powers at Constantinople, that they might make a joint representation to the Porte, with a view to the cessation of hostilities as a preliminary to the conclusion of peace.

When this important news was published in the forenoon, there was a sense of relief in Athens that the calamitous war was likely to come to an end. Of course there was a party opposed to any settlement—the party of revolution. They said they would only agree to peace on three conditions—1st, that no Greek territory should be surrendered to Turkey; 2nd, that the finances of Greece should *not* be placed under International control; and 3rd, that the resignation of the King and the Crown Prince should be insisted upon. After making inquiry in every likely quarter, I

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found that this party was of no numerical strength and of no moral weight in the community.

Optimistic views regarding the speedy termination of the war were not encouraged by the publication of the following semi-official note, telegraphed from Paris, which represented the opinion of the Turkish Government :—

"The Porte is inclined to support the efforts of the Powers and to facilitate the negotiations which will follow their intervention. The Ottoman Government will not, however, consent to an armistice, as it does not wish to afford the Greeks an opportunity of reorganizing their forces under the pretext of conducting negotiations for peace. Diplomatic circles agree in regarding the continuance of hostilities as the surest way of preventing *pourparlers* from dragging and of arriving at a result in conformity with the object in view. According to information from a good source, the Sultan will in no way show himself uncompromising, but will display a conciliating spirit. He will accordingly not draw back from the promise he has made to grant Crete autonomy, and the war indemnity which it is understood he intends to demand is not expected to be excessive. His Majesty will ask for a slight rectification of the frontier, of a merely strategic value, in the vicinity of Analypsis and Nezeros on the eastern

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portion of the Thessalian frontier, where he wishes the boundary to be altered in such a manner as to give Turkey the summits of the mountains."

Further, there were reports from Constantinople that the Sultan refused absolutely to entertain any proposal for an armistice until after the Feast or Fast of Bairam, which would not be until May 16.

In the meantime the Government of M. Ralli set about doing its best to reorganize the defensive resources of the country. New guns and ammunition were ordered from Germany, France, and Austria; contracts for other war stores were entered into, and an attempt was made to put the commissariat on a better footing. That had broken down completely, and reports reached Athens that the rations served out to the army occupying Domokos consisted of only bread and cheese, and very little of these. All the troops, regulars or irregulars, which could be gathered together, amounting to about 3000, including 800 Garibaldians under Ricciotti Garibaldi, were forwarded to Domokos, with the object of strengthening the line of defence stretching from that point to Armyro, where General Smolenskis had reformed the army which had retired from Velestino.

During the suspension of hostilities, I made a round of some of the hospitals and took note of how the wounded had been treated. Captain

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Pirie, the member of Parliament for East Aberdeen, continued for several weeks his splendid work amongst the wounded and sick at the front from Armyro to Domokos, in conjunction with the Greek Red-Cross Society, and afterwards took a share in establishing the British hospitals at Chalcis and Piræus.

The staff of the "*Chronicle* National Fund" did a splendid work. Dr. Osborne, immediately on his arrival in Athens, was sent to Volo to bring back to Piræus all the wounded for whom transport had not previously been obtained. There were received on board the *Thessalia* 101 wounded from Velestino, and on the way down nine more were embarked at Stylida. During the voyage seven of the patients died. A Greek priest, who had been taken on board at Volo, administered the last Sacrament, and read the service of the Greek Church at their burial at Stylida and Chalcis.

An English hospital was established in a handsome mansion, built on a promontory of one of the beautiful bays between the port of Piræus and Phaleron, exposed to every cooling breeze. It was divided into four wards and an operating room; and everything was sweet, clean, and fresh. The staff consisted of Dr. Osborne and Dr. Moffat, with Nurses Johnston, Hill, Walter, and Whitford.

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All the wards were lofty and airy; and the patients reposed on spring-beds and nice fresh clothing. The nature of the wounds in this hospital was interesting. One man had been shot through the mouth; another had his hand injured by a shell-splinter, and it required to be amputated. Probably a fourth of the number were suffering from wounds, not caused by fragments of shells, but by stones driven upwards by the bursting of the shells.

When I happened to be making inspection of this hospital, a surprise visit was made to it by the Queen of Greece, the Crown Princess, and Princess Marie, accompanied by their ladies-in-waiting and by M. Messala, the Court Chamberlain. Her Majesty and the Princesses were delighted with all the arrangements. When conducted over the building by Dr. Osborne, Captain Pirie, and Mrs. Fenwick, the nursing superintendent, their Royal Highnesses spoke sympathetically with every single patient. The Queen had a special interview with Captain Birch, of the English section of the Foreign Legion, who had been wounded at Pharsala; and she especially thanked the Captain, and through him the other English volunteers, for their devotion and sacrifices to the cause of Greece. Speaking afterwards to an Irishman named Corrigan, who expressed the hope that he would be able to rejoin his comrades in a few days at the front, the Queen

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said, "The war is over, my good man; there will happily be no more fighting." The Princesses were equally gracious with the patients, who were all delighted with the visit; and the staff were complimented on the completeness of the arrangements.

There were four hospitals in Athens. That known as the Military Hospital was established in a fine palatial building near the Arch of Hadrian. The wards were contained on a ground and a first floor, and approached by wide corridors. There were four hundred wounded here, in charge of Greek doctors with the assistance of two English nurses, Misses Skerman and Coombs. The majority of the patients were suffering from bullet-wounds, but six were injured on the head and hands, mainly from fragments of percussion shells. An examination of the cases convinced me that the shrapnel fired by the Turkish batteries injured very few Greek soldiers, and I saw men who had taken part in the fights at Ravenni, Bougassie, Nezeros, Mati, Pharsala, and Velestino. This failure of the shrapnel to burst at the proper distance, to which I referred in my descriptions of different engagements, accounted for the comparatively small Greek loss considering the long exposure of the troops. A special ward, the entrance to which was protected by an iron gate with a

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sentry on duty, was set apart for the Turkish wounded prisoners. These were treated exactly in the same manner as the Greeks. In fact they were in a better condition, because the Greeks seemed to insist on keeping on their uniforms in bed, and in some cases even their caps, just as they had evidently been brought from the battle-field. The reason they gave was that they felt too cold in the free ventilation from open windows. On the other hand, the Turks consented to be properly undressed and arrayed in nice clean, comfortable underclothing. The most severely injured that I saw in all the hospitals was one of these Turks. He had one bullet-wound on the left arm, another on the right arm, and a wound from a shell fragment on his breast. It was very evident that he was not long for this world. I was informed that the recoveries from serious wounds were marvellously rapid, and there was a remarkable absence of fever. Except as to wearing uniform in bed, there was nothing to find fault with in this hospital, although it was more crowded than one likes to see in England.

The Military School, situated near the Place de la Concorde, was converted into an hospital. It is a magnificent two-storied building, consisting of a series of splendid marble halls. For the purpose of an hospital it was divided into three blocks—the

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Davidson block, so named from the charming young English nurse from Guy's who was in charge, with sixty-five beds; the Curtis block, named from Nurse Curtis in charge, with thirty-two beds; and the Fouché block, so named from Professor Fouché of Lille, the surgeon superintendent, with from thirty to forty beds. The whole of the nursing arrangements were under the superintendence of Sister Farnsworth, and the other English Sisters, besides those mentioned, were Misses Stollard, Fox, Child, and Flannigan. One of the pavilions of the National Museum was converted into a hospital; and the city hospital, which need not be more particularly described, was also devoted to the reception of wounded soldiers.

The need of an ambulance hospital nearer the front became desirable after the occupation of Volo by the Turks. Dr. Hirsch had established an excellent one under canvas marquees at Port San Marina, but the accommodation was too limited. Mr. Arthur Hill, an English merchant in Athens, with a minute knowledge of the country, suggested Chalcis as a good centre, and accompanied Dr. F. C. Abbott and Mr. Pirie, M.P., thither for the purpose of selecting suitable buildings. These were found in the National School, consisting of two blocks standing in a spacious compound on a fine open rise not far from the old Venetian fortifi-

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cations. In the course of a few days these buildings were converted into a splendid hospital with every modern requisite, for the treatment of eighty patients. The staff consisted, besides Dr. Abbott, of Dr. Fox-Symonds and Dr. Davis. Sister Nesbit was the sister in charge of the nurses, and her assistants were Sisters Fox and Lees. No more valuable work was done among the wounded in Greece than in this English hospital at Chalcis.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE BATTLE OF DOMOKOS

DESPITE the current rumours of an armistice, and even that the terms of peace were being discussed by the Ambassadors at Constantinople, there was a feeling in the air, so to speak, which prompted me to leave Athens once more for the front. I called upon M. Ralli, the Prime Minister, and found him sitting in Cabinet Council with his colleagues. They received me with cordiality, and assured me that the armistice had not been signed, although they were desirous of peace on honourable terms, and had placed the cause of Greece unreservedly in the hands of the Great Powers. The Sultan had, however, refused to entertain the question of an armistice until after the Fast of Bairam. It was hinted to me pretty broadly that the Greek position between Domokos and Surpi, to which latter place Smolenskis had withdrawn his

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brigade from Armyro, was momentarily expected to be attacked.

This was the afternoon of Saturday, May 15, and I at once made hurried preparations for the journey to Domokos. I joined at Piræus the steamer *Thetis*, which had been chartered by the Government for the conveyance to Stylida of stores, bread, flour, and a hundred members of the Foreign Legion. It was midnight before we left harbour, and long after that before we could settle down on the floor of the saloon to snatch a brief sleep. The overcrowded state of the place, however, drove me on deck, where I spent the rest of the night, watching with a languid interest the now familiar shores of the Archipelago. In the course of the forenoon I interviewed a good many of the troops of the Foreign Legion. Among them were twenty young Greeks who had been students in Paris. Many had come from Galatz, Ibraila, and Bucharest in Roumania. There were several Frenchmen, and one Scot who had been bitten by the fever of adventure, and had at his own expense come out to Greece to join, as he put it, the great crusade for liberty. The ardour of the Scot was already somewhat cooled; and he did not speak very respectfully of the French contingent, who, he said, were mostly wastrels from Paris and Marseilles, and had little regard for the distinction

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between *meum* and *tuum*. Taking the lot, however, as a whole, they seemed full of enthusiasm; but when I learned that they had only been drilled twice, once in company exercise, and a second time for a few hours on a rifle-range near Athens, it occurred to me such an addition to the Greek army would not be of much use. There were also on board a few Garibaldian troops in the picturesque uniform of red shirt and cap and green pants.

The spirit with which some Greeks behaved found illustration in the person of Lieutenant Kontaratos, who was one of the passengers in the saloon. The last time I had seen him was at the battle of Nezeros, where he was wounded. Although his wound had not yet completely healed, he was going to join his Evzone regiment at Domokos. Another passenger was Herr Agge, from Stockholm. He was over seventy years of age, but bustled about with irrepressible energy, and his refined face lit up in a beautiful manner as he discoursed eloquently on the Greek cause and the iniquity of the unspeakable Turk. He had brought with him from Sweden, at his own expense, three doctors and ten nurses to join the Red-Cross Society, and he himself was going to the front to take his share in the labour of caring for the wounded.

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Chalcis was reached at noon, and Stylida about six o'clock, the monotony being only relieved by the stupid interchange of shots from the recruits on board the *Thetis* and those on another steamer which overtook us late in the afternoon. This formed the first baptism of fire to many on board, for the bullets from the other vessel whistled through the rigging, although fortunately no one was injured. There was some difficulty about disembarking at Stylida, and we steamed on a few miles further to port San Marina, where the facilities were greater for landing the stores. Night was creeping on when I reached shore, and it was quite dark when I got a conveyance to take me on to Lamia.

Searching for accommodation for the night, I encountered Dr. Davis, of the British Hospital at Chalcis, who was returning from a visit to the Crown Prince's head-quarters at Domokos. He told me that the Commander-in-Chief, two days before, had expressed the opinion to himself and Captain Noel, of the British Ambulance, that there would be no more fighting, and that they had better prepare to disband the hospital and ambulance. In the café I also found several correspondents, who had returned to Lamia from Domokos on the understanding that the war was over, and that terms of peace were being arranged. They gave

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sad accounts of the state of the army at Domokos. The troops had no tents, and rain had fallen heavily for many days. They lay in the trenches, or open ground, exposed to the elements and the bitter cold mountain-air—the neighbouring heights being covered with snow. Although there had been plenty of mutton, bread had run short, and much fever and dysentery prevailed. Nearly all the correspondents were ill from bad food and prolonged exposure, and they had been glad to come on to Lamia, where they hoped to get a decent meal and a little rest.

I found accommodation on the floor of a café, but was up betimes for the double reason—that it was impossible to obtain sleep, and that I desired to review the situation. The town was crowded, and the streets in endless confusion from the number of fugitives who had wandered thither and miserably squatted on the side-walks. One might have imagined that there was a repetition of the cruel siege of the town 320 years before Christ, in the war when the Greeks made a final effort to free themselves from the Macedonian yoke.

In the hills surrounding Lamia there were 40,000 refugees. They formed little camps in family or village groups. At a distance the scene was picturesque enough, but a near approach showed how miserable it all was. For three days

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rain had been incessant, and they had been without shelter except that afforded by a few blankets and small arbours hastily constructed with the branches of trees. Women had given birth to children on the sodden ground under the sole curtain of the sky. While my dragoman was hunting after a conveyance in which to make the journey across the Spercheios and Phurka Pass to Domokos, I met Mr. Fred Villiers, the celebrated war artist. He had secured a carriage, and was about to make a start, and he invited me to join him. This I did, leaving instructions with my dragoman to follow with a wagon and food-supply for two or three days.

The long ascent was slow, not only because of the precipitous nature of many parts of the road, but because it was frequently encumbered with commissariat trains, and rickety country carts, drawn by feeble horses, containing belated peasants who were making their way to Lamia. Occasionally we overtook a camel-train laden with biscuits for the troops at the front. Further on were little groups of three, four, or more soldiers broken in health and visibly weak, dragging their feeble limbs to the rear. Once clear of the Lamia valley, with its picturesque, castle-crowned hill, and spacious monastery in a sheltered strath beyond, the roadway zigzags up the southern face of Mount

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Othrys, presenting a splendid panorama of the wide, but wide and bare valley of Spercheios, with a distant background of snow-covered ranges. Near the top, in a slight hollow, where large springs made an excellent watering-ground, was a detachment of infantry, and a few horsemen who were making their way to the front. A section of the Foreign Legion and Garibaldians, which had come up with us in the steamer from the Piræus, we passed with a swinging stride which contrasted with the feeble step of the stream of invalids going in the opposite direction.

By and by we met a carriage containing three American correspondents who were returning to Lamia. We stopped to exchange information. They were certain that no military operations were imminent. There was nothing to indicate such when they left Domokos in the morning. They drew a gloomy picture of the condition of the camp, of the bad sanitation of the place, and of the impossibility of obtaining decent food-supply. They advised us to return. On the other hand, we were sceptical as to the armistice, and had an idea that the Fast of Bairam having concluded the previous night, it was possible the Turks would make an attack even that day. They went on their way to Lamia; we pushed on to Domokos. Presently we reached the summit of the Phurka Pass, 2800

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feet above the level of the sea, and began the descent by a nicely-graded road, through a thick forest watered by plentiful streamlets, to a rich table-land, with Lake Nezeros on its western border. Close by the shores of the lake groups of refugees were camped, and the villages in the neighbourhood were being rapidly evacuated by their inhabitants. After an ascent of another ridge, which bore traces of ancient fortifications, we turned into the little mountain-valley immediately to the south of Domokos. Here we heard the boom of guns. The Turkish attack had already commenced.

The town of Domokos is built on the steep northern face of the Othrys range of mountains, 1200 feet above the plain of Pharsala. Towering over the town is a rounded peak, on which is perched a mediæval castle, and on either side bold bluffs, with long, sloping sides running east and west. From these heights folds and spurs of the main range dip into the plain on the west side. On the east, two parallel ridges connect the town-plateau with the plain. The main road from Lamia and the Phurka Pass takes a sharp turn north at the town of Domokos, and winds down the face of successive ridges to the plain. When the level ground is reached the road diverges at an obtuse angle for a short distance; then in a straight line runs north for four or five miles.

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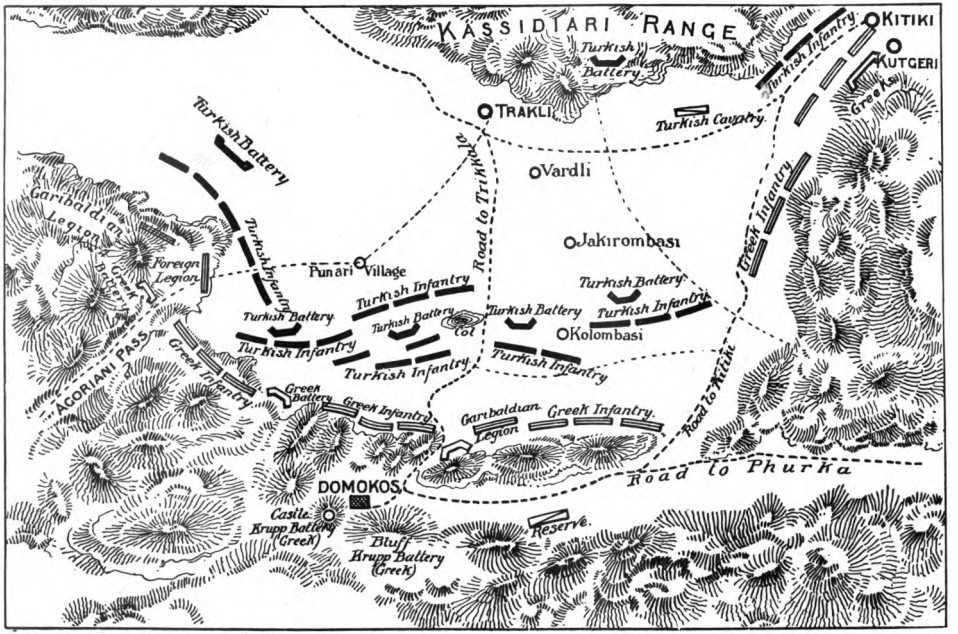

SKETCH PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF DOMOKOS

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Next it turns westerly round the shoulder of the mountain-range which encloses the plain on the north side, and is called Kassidiari.

Kassidiari range can be crossed from Pharsala in three directions—one on the west, by Ryzi and Karodzali; the second in the centre, by Seterli; and the third on the east, by Kiozlar; a branch from the latter leading east to Armyro.

The Turkish commander had sent a strong force of infantry, cavalry, and mountain-artillery by all three roads. Those by Kiozlar were evidently intended to cut off communication between the main Greek army at Domokos and Smolenskis' division in the neighbourhood of Armyro, and so to turn the Crown Prince's right.

The Greek position was on the crest and faces of the folds of hills from about six miles west of Domokos to Kutzeri and Kitiki—two villages some six miles to the east of Domokos, on the foot-hills of the Kassidiari range. The extension on the left was intended to defend the entrance to the Agoriani Pass, by which the projected railway—a great part of the permanent way of which has been graded—will run from Lamia to Larissa. The value of this pass was, that if it had been captured by the Turks, Domokos would have been turned to the left, and the Greek army taken in the left-rear.

Roughly speaking, the Greek position was in

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the shape of a horse-shoe, of which the left member was the shortest.

Three batteries of mountain-artillery were planted on ridges on the left of the position, beginning at Agoriani, supported by 5000 infantry, including the Foreign Legion and the greater proportion of the Garibaldian brigade. On the ridges and slopes in front of Domokos, leading down into the plain, were five batteries of mountain- and field-guns, with from 12,000 to 15,000 infantry. On the right-front were disposed four batteries of field- and mountain-guns; while on the extreme right there was one battery of mountain-guns at Kitiki, and another at Kutzeri—the infantry aligned there being about 13,000. Six thousand infantry were held in reserve on the slope of the bold spur to the east of Domokos.

The Greek defence was strengthened by two 15-centimetre guns—one placed in the old Castle above the town, and another on the commanding spur to the east of Domokos.

The total Greek force amounted to between 35,000 and 40,000 men, including 500 cavalry.

The left wing was commanded by Colonel Mavromichaelis, and the right by General Macris.

When the Turkish army had been deployed in the course of the day, there could not have been fewer than 50,000 men to the left and in front of

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Domokos, with perhaps 25,000 on the extreme right, whose operations I cannot speak of except as to result in the sequel.

Shortly after nine o'clock the Turkish troops were seen advancing along the main Pharsala road. Almost simultaneously a force appeared on the crest of Kassidiari, and opened fire on the Greek outposts on the opposite ridge, which replied. To the most sceptical it then became evident that the war was not over, and that the Turkish commander, having held Bairam, was about to resume his gorge of gore.

The Turkish mountain-batteries on Kassidiari kept up a cannonade, until the Moslem troops, marching in grand style along the main Pharsala road, had time to deploy in the plain and take order of battle. The spectacle was simply magnificent in the bright sunshine, as seen from the heights of Domokos.

Five squadrons of cavalry galloped down the road for two miles, turned eastwards, and disappeared behind the rising ground below Kassidiari.

The infantry marched steadily in snake-like lines for three miles, then extended on the left behind the village of Punari, which was soon smoking, and along the Greek left-front.

Two batteries of artillery unlimbered on the east of the road in line with a low Col, which admirably

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screened for a time the rest of the Turkish movement for their attack on the Greek left.

The big Greek Krupp guns on the Castle and adjoining bluff opened fire, and soon finding range, disturbed these parade-like movements, which were, however, carried out with cool precision. The Greek battery on the brow of the irregular hill, just above the winding road leading down into the plain, also picked up the range and showered shell after shell on the Turkish battery. The Evzones in the intrenchments on the slopes and at the foot of the hill also began firing, and between half-past two and three o'clock the engagement along the front was general. Half-an-hour afterwards, so hot was the artillery fire on either side that it seemed as if they were delivering salvoes. The Greek range, however, was better, and we could see the terrible destruction caused both among the Turkish infantry lines and in their batteries.

It was characteristic, not only of the looseness of the discipline of the Greek troops, but of their keen interest in the fate of the day, that the vast majority of the reserves left their position on the long well-protected slope of the valley east of Domokos, and crowded on every crest and peak from which a view of the action could be obtained. With the discharge of every well-directed shell

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from their own batteries below, or from the Castle and bluff above, they cheered with a heartiness which at times could be heard even above the noise of the guns.

One shell from the Castle Krupp dropped amid a column of Turkish infantry when it was preparing to extend at the cast corner of the Col in the plain, and literally left a lane of dead and wounded men. Another burst fair in a Turkish battery on the right of the road, and did so much damage as to silence two guns for a long time.

The Turks had their revenge, however, for about the same time a shell from the Turkish left battery pitched beneath a munition wagon belonging to the Greek battery, on the slope to the right of the road winding down to the plain, and exploded the caisson. A column of opal smoke rose above the mountain and wreathed away towards the old Acropolis of Domokos; while on the torn earth lay the mangled remains of several gunners. The pyrotechnics of war for a time mantled the doleful tragedy; and in the excitement of the continuing battle the sad spectacle was soon forgotten.

At four o'clock more Turkish cavalry appeared on the Pharsala road, and swung at a trot away to the right. At the same time the Turkish right attack was further developed. From behind either side of the Col, two batteries advanced into the

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plain and opened fire against the Greek intrenchments on the ridges below the town. Lines of Turkish infantry marched westwards in front of the smoking village of Punari, extended in beautiful order, and advanced in a fan-shaped formation, and engaged the Evzones and a force of about one hundred and fifty Garibaldians in the intrenchments. These latter had somehow or other been separated from the Foreign Legion in the course of the forenoon, and under the command of Cipriani they had been ordered into the intrenchments of the Greek battery on the slope, to the assistance of the Evzones.

When the Turks came on, "as prettily as on a field-day on a parade-ground," to quote the expression of an Englishman near me, the Evzones and Garibaldians poured a withering fire on the line, while shrapnel from the Greek advanced batteries burst overhead and cut the lines with irregular gashes, so to speak. On they came, however, the thin ranks closing up. It was difficult which to admire most—the grand determination of the Turkish troops constantly shaken by shell and rifle-volleys, or the cool, splendidly-directed fire of the Evzones and the Garibaldians.

The Turks managed to advance to the very foot of a slope covered with poplars, which they apparently meant to assault with the bayonet. Here,

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however, at last the concentrated shell and rifle-firing from the Greek batteries and intrenchments shook them. Their line was terribly thinned. Gaps became wider and wider. They faltered, turned, and sought cover in the plain.

Out of the one hundred and fifty Garibaldians who were in this fierce onslaught, ten were killed and forty-five wounded, their commander, Cipriani, being amongst the latter. Nothing was more striking or heroic than the behaviour of a Garibaldian *vivandière*, who, in red jacket, fearlessly attended to the wounded, and who, I am glad to say, came unscathed through the combat and subsequent retreat—never losing touch of her patients until she saw them in the German ambulance hospital at Port San Marina, near Stylida.

To revert to the critical moment. A squadron of Greek cavalry descended the winding road towards the plain as if to charge, should the Turkish infantry assault be successful. But they were afterwards withdrawn.

About the same time a large Turkish force was seen to extend away to the left towards Agoriani and the Gronitza Pass. The exits of the latter pass (not far from the village of Amarali) on to the plain were occupied by the Garibaldians, under the command of Ricciotti Garibaldi. Amongst them were a company of Englishmen commanded

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by Captain Short, and a few Frenchmen. On the ridges protecting the entrance to the Agoriani Pass were posted the Foreign Legion, which included the English company under Lieutenant Ramshay, who had taken command at Pharsala when Captain Birch was wounded; and a small body of Danish volunteers, who had throughout the campaign made comrades with the Englishmen.

A body of at least six thousand Turkish infantry, supported by artillery and cavalry, debouched from the left shoulder of Kassidiari range, where with a good glass one could see the outer ranks of their camp. Instead of following the main road to Domokos, along which the rest of the Turkish troops had marched, they took a cross-road to the west, approaching the extreme Greek left in a formation which, from the distance, seemed a flattened semi-circle. They then, in a very handsome manner, changed front, and sent two divisions which made an almost simultaneous attack on the Garibaldians and the Foreign Legion. The Turks of these divisions were armed with the Maüser rifle, and their range was considerable. The bad aim, however, of the Turkish soldiers rendered their fire less fatal than it might have been.

A battery of Greek artillery on the ridge high above the infantry played upon the advancing Turks with splendid aim; and the Garibaldians,

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withholding their fire until the advancing Turkish lines were comparatively close, delivered it then with deadly effect, and stopped the advance of the Turks. Ricciotti Garibaldi thereupon ordered his men to make a bayonet charge upon the disordered Turkish line, but the Turks did not wait for it, and hurriedly retired across the plain. It was during this sharp encounter that the Italian deputy, Signor Fratti, was killed.

In the meantime what may be called the left wing of this special force had advanced on the position of the Foreign Legion, the strongest point of which was on the slopes below the village of Katagoriani. Here too the fighting was close and severe, but the Turkish advance was always held in check by the cool manner in which the Englishmen and the Danes delivered alternate volleys. The Turkish infantry, completely broken by this fire, were already beginning to withdraw, when the Garibaldians, who had descended into the plain, turned to the right and marched along the base of the foot-hills, and joined in finally repelling this formidable attack, in which unhappily Captain Veratasse, who was in command of the Foreign Legion, was mortally wounded. The English company, it may be mentioned, had a loss of seven wounded and eight missing out of thirty-six.

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Shortly after four o'clock there was a strong development on the right at Kassidiari, where the fighting had first begun in the morning. The distance was too great to distinguish the details of the fighting, but the mountain-crest was soon ablaze, caused by the burning of the brushwood and the village of Kitiki. This village, in fact, the Turks had captured, driving back General Macris' right wing and killing some fifty Greeks.

General Macris sent impatiently for reinforcements, and three thousand of the reserves, with two batteries of mountain-guns, were despatched to his assistance.

Another advance was made on the front-centre below Domokos. For three-quarters of an hour the infantry and artillery fire was continuous, and its effect was seen in the stream of wounded men being brought back to the rear up the winding road.

The tide of battle now rolled to our right, and an especially vicious attack was made by the Turks on the Evzones' intrenchments, and on the lines of the 2nd and the 10th Regiments of infantry, which, however, stood gallantly up to the fire. Colonel Mavromichaelis, who happened at the moment to ride along this part of his front, sent for additional reinforcements. The remaining reserves, three thousand in number, were marched

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across the ridge at the right front of Domokos, and extended in support of the fighting line, coming immediately into action. During this warm fusillade, Colonel Mavromichaelis was wounded on the hip by a bullet, but rode leisurely back behind the ridge, whence he was conveyed in a carriage to Lamia. His aide-de-camp and nephew, Lieutenant George Mavromichaelis, was at the same time shot—a bullet penetrating his forehead, and coming out at the top of his skull. This young man was passionately loved by his men, and they showed their devotion by carrying him out of the hail of rifle-fire to the shelter of the ridge, placing him in a carriage and drawing it themselves all the way across the passes to Lamia, in the hope that in this manner he would suffer less than from the jerking of horses in the shafts. The young fellow lived until Lamia was reached, but there was only time for him to receive extreme unction from the priest ere he died.

To revert to the battle. It was now nearly six o'clock, and the whole Greek army was engaged from right to left, presenting a thrilling spectacle, with the repeated assaults of the Turkish infantry and the quick service of artillery on both sides.

The tide of battle now seemed to roll away towards the left, and the whole plain in that

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direction was chequered with men engaged in fierce conflict. There was a still more ominous silence away on the extreme right, and I began to fear that things were not favourable in that direction. Towards seven o'clock the fire on both sides slackened, and as evening approached it died away to occasional shots from the field-batteries, or a huge shell pitched from the Castle or the spur Krupp batteries.

Just at sunset I saw the Greek cavalry coming up from the plain on to the plateau, to the east of Domokos, and riding away along the road which leads down into the plain surrounding Lake Nezeros. Even then, although the Greeks had gallantly held their own in the front and right-front, and had even scored a distinct success on the extreme left opposite Agoriani, I felt that the day had gone against them on the whole, and that it would be impossible to hold these positions, which had been defended with so much gallantry and so signal success for so many hours, much longer.

I could not help taking one last look, ere I left the shoulder of the ridge which leads down into the plain opposite the town, at the ever-memorable scene of an ever-memorable battle. In the sweet sunset light a haze of smoke hung over the plain like the mirage-sea on the desert, broken only here

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SOLDIERLY DEVOTION: LIEUT. MAVROMICHAELIS WHEN FATALLY WOUNDED BEING DRAWN BY HIS MEN FROM DOMOKOS TO LAMIA

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and there by little wavelets of flame. The pall of night gradually spread. The highest western peaks caught the last crimson and violet tints of the sun already set. And so, over the ensanguined field, in softened glory, human conflict ceased for the night.

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CHAPTER XX

THE END OF DOMOKOS AND THE RETREAT

THE result of the day's prolonged and terrible struggle was that, so far as the Greek centre and left were concerned, we had held our own with bravery and sustained courage, which even the enemy must acknowledge. Young troops and raw recruits, by unswerving steadiness under fire which might have demoralized veterans, had successfully resisted assaults of hosts of the best-disciplined soldiers I have ever seen in the field. Their line was unbroken from the mouth of the Agoriani Pass to some distance far away on the right. Indeed, on the extreme left, the Garibaldians and the Foreign Legion had not only beat back the Turkish assault, but had taken the offensive for a time, and only withdrew from pursuit of the defeated Turks on the appearance of a force of Moslem cavalry.

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Meantime we could only ask, in Isaiah's phrase, "What of the night?"—away on the right, where General Macris had been gallantly struggling against overwhelming numbers. Of course, being seven miles away from this part of the field, I can only speak from hearsay. But an officer who took part in the fight there tersely told me that at Kitiki the Greeks were assailed about two o'clock by an overwhelming Turkish force on the Kiozlar road, and after a fierce fight were compelled to retire on the village of Buzi, a mile and a half away. There they made a stand, waiting for reinforcements, for which General Macris had asked Colonel Mastrapas as early as two o'clock. These reinforcements were dispatched on the moment of receipt of the demand, as I can testify, having at the moment, in passing from one part of the field to the other, taken a stand near the Colonel when the orderly with the message came up. The reinforcements, which consisted of about 3000 infantry and two mountain-batteries, arrived too late. General Macris' wing was overwhelmed after, my informant said, the gallant Greeks had galled the repeated Turkish assaults until "we could not see the ground for dead and wounded Turks." The Greek line was broken at eight o'clock, and the right flank turned. There was nothing for it but to retreat from Domokos, to prevent the left wing,

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which had fought so splendidly, and I may say victoriously, being taken in the rear.

When I left the field about nine o'clock I had been told in general terms of this disastrous result; but before resuming my own personal narrative let me gather one or two threads of information which came to me afterwards from various sources.

There were some who still believed that the battle away to the right had not gone so badly, and that the Turks must, even with their overwhelming numbers, be compelled to try conclusions in another day's bloody conflict. These resolved to camp for the night at Domokos. Among them was my friend Mr. Maud, the *Graphic* artist, who, with a few others, had taken refuge in a deserted house. He had thrown himself down, and had just fallen into a sleep, when at midnight a dragoman touched him on the shoulder, whispering, "Rise! the Greeks are in full retreat, and we too must go." Maud made hurried preparations for departure, and a dramatic scene followed. The little company had noticed as they lay four Greek soldiers entering the house and lying down in a corner, apparently exhausted. They had come there as much for the company as for the shelter. As Maud and his companions were turning to leave the house, he said to the dragoman, "Give these poor beggars a chance

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of escape, and awaken them." The dragoman approached and shook them, one after the other. They were sleeping the sleep that knows no waking. They had been grievously wounded, and, like the stricken deer, had sought a friendly lair in which to die.

When darkness set in, the Foreign Legion retired on a small village, half-way between Katagoriani and Amarali. The wounded commander, Veratasse, was carried to one of the houses in the village, where, although mortally wounded, he wrote a despatch, containing an account of the operations of the left wing, to the Commander-in-Chief. He died at three o'clock in the morning. The English section of the Legion, under Lieutenant Ramshay, took possession of an empty house, where they made up a fire, intending to pass the night there. Adjutant Robert Sinclair, the Swedish officer whom I have previously mentioned, and who had been my companion at Velestino, turned up at this house, and informed Lieutenant Ramshay that he had volunteered to go into Domokos with Veratasse's despatch. "But," said he, "I am not going to start until the moon rises. Will you give me a call when it gets up?" Adjutant Sinclair then lay down by the fireside and fell asleep. The sentry woke him at moonrise, and he left for Domokos. He never reached his destination.

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His body was discovered on one of the spurs in front of Domokos, shot through the back—whether by Turks or by Greek brigands will never be known. He had been plundered of his money, although his papers had been left untouched, and these were, I believe, forwarded by Edhem Pasha to his relatives at Stockholm. Adjutant Sinclair was a courteous gentleman and a brave soldier, beloved by all with whom he came in contact. His favourite position in every engagement in which he took part was in the most advanced Greek battery, and his cool behaviour was the admiration of all. By no one was his untoward fate more lamented than his comrades in Thessaly.

About five in the morning, a sergeant of Evzones came with the order to the Foreign Legion that the left wing was retiring through the Agoriani Pass, and that the Foreign Legion would form the rearguard, the English company to be the rear party. The troops then went into the hills, where they became scattered, and it was not until four or five days after that they reached the neighbourhood of Thermopylæ.

My dragoman, who followed me from Lamia with a carriage, mistook the rendezvous, and we never saw each other during the whole day. He had gone to the neighbourhood of the Crown

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Prince's quarters—a balconied house in the higher reaches of the town, from which, and from a bold bluff above it, the Crown Prince had watched the progress of the battle until nightfall. Failing to find me, my dragoman determined to spend the night in the carriage, trusting that at dawn we should meet each other. About half-past eleven he heard a great bustling noise, and, looking out, saw that the whole camp was in movement. He met an officer of the staff of his acquaintance who, in answer to a question as to what it all meant, said with tears in his voice and in his eyes, "We must go in retreat again." Some little time after, the Crown Prince, attended by his staff and an escort of cavalry, moved along the road towards Phurka. My dragoman followed at a respectful distance, and spent some hours of the night-bivouac on the heights of the Phurka Pass, a short distance from the Commander-in-Chief and his staff.

The search for my dragoman having proved vain, I rejoined Villiers, and after consultation we agreed to move on to Lamia, if possible, before the roadway had become entirely blocked by the retreating troops. Villiers' carriage had been drawn up on the slope of a gentle hill, a couple of miles probably to the east of Domokos, not very far from a small house which had been constituted a temporary hospital. The ground all round for

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several hundred yards was literally covered with wounded men, who were being attended to as quickly as possible by the army surgeons, previous to being placed in carts for transport to Lamia. Incidentally I may mention that nothing could have excelled the skill and the care with which these Greek surgeons applied their first dressings to the wounded; and the high proportion of casualties among the doctors at the front is the best testimony to their self-sacrificing devotion. The worst cases had been taken into the small temporary hospital, dimly lit by one candle, and the scene there was sufficient to sicken one for a lifetime of war and its attendant horrors.

The first part of our journey was unobstructed, but in half-an-hour we overtook the leading train of country carts and carriages conveying the wounded to Lamia. It made the blood grill to hear the groans of the wounded as we passed. In the plain east of Lake Nezeros we were detained for some little time by a wagon which had inadvertly been drawn across the embanked road. Amongst others in that wagon was an officer whose body had been literally torn by the fragments of a shell, and he had besought the driver to stop so that he might be allowed to die in peace. The sum of the agony experienced by the 1100 or 1200 wounded in their conveyance across the rough

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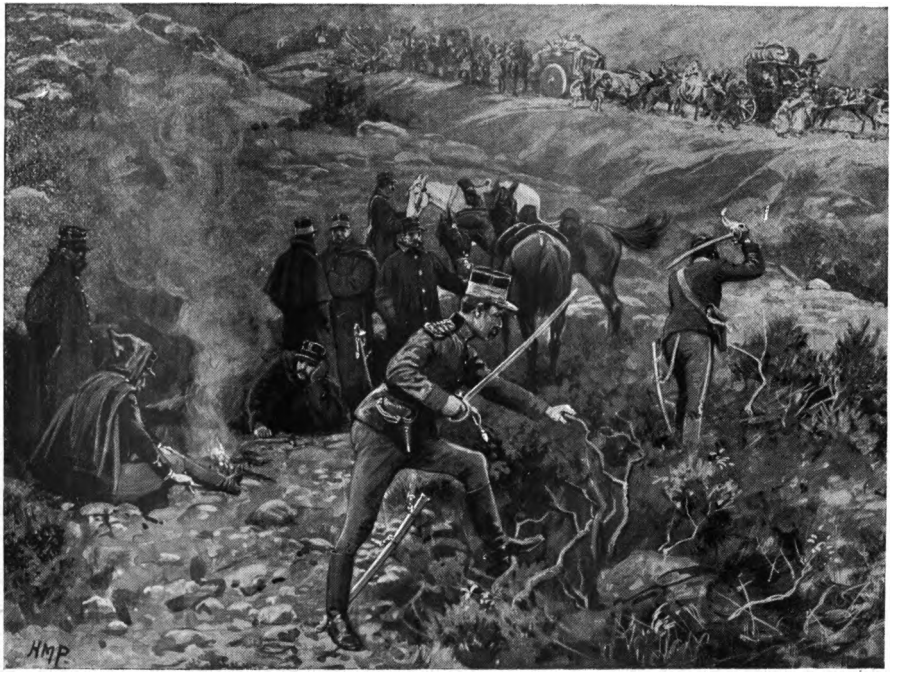

THE GREEK RETREAT FROM DOMOKOS: THE CROWN PRINCE AND HIS STAFF IN THE PHURKA PASS: A NIGHT BIVOUAC

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roads of the Phurka Pass can only be reckoned by the Recording Angel.

There was a long block by the springs at the beginning of the ascent of Phurka, caused by a string of 200 horses, which were being driven to Domokos as cavalry and artillery remounts. These had got mixed with bullock-carts laden with bread going in the same direction, and interlocked with stragglers of all kinds making for Lamia. By the exercise of patience the block was, as it were, carded, and the two streams went their respective ways. On the top of the pass were large flocks of sheep, which were being slowly driven southwards to prevent them falling into the hands of the Turks, and as at several points of the road it was bounded on the one hand by a precipitous cliff, and on the other by sheer descent of 300 or 400 feet, the passage was both difficult and dangerous. When the wide valley of the Spercheios was reached, fugitives and flocks were enabled to spread away from the road, and greater progress was made. But it was not until half-past one in the morning that we reached Lamia. Fortunately there was a full moon, and its gracious light probably prevented a stampede.

We obtained admission to a café, and were permitted to take possession of an empty room, where Villiers and myself, utterly exhausted, literally threw

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ourselves on the floor, and slept for about a couple of hours. Then, extemporizing a table, we proceeded to finish our despatches, in the faint hope that we might get them sent through from Lamia to Athens, as there were two wires between these two points. It was a vain hope, for on inquiry we found that one of the lines had been broken, and the other was blocked by Government messages.

It was evident that another rush to Athens had to be made. The difficulty was how? My dragoman, who had arrived shortly after dawn, informed me that the carriage which he had hired the previous day could not be obtained. The proprietor needed it for the escape of his wife and family. The only other carriage in the place had, with four horses, been already secured by a rival correspondent for an American agency, and he was making preparations for the long drive to Athens, over the pass of Thermopylæ and through Thebes. The only thing for it was to try and make our way to Port San Marina, and there endeavour to secure a passage in one of the hospital ships.

While inquiries were being made, I was in the square watching the long strings of refugees passing through from the Domokos side of the pass, and a seemingly endless array of carts conveying the wounded, among these being Colonel Mavromichaelis and his nephew, Lieutenant Mavro-

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michaelis. The townspeople were naturally in a state of great excitement. Above the hum could be heard the sharp rattle of hammers. Merchants and shopkeepers were nailing up their premises. I was touched on the shoulder, and addressed by the dragoman of my friend Lieutenant Wester, who, he said, was with the Crown Prince and his staff a short distance outside the town. He had been sent into Lamia to see if he could not forage some coffee for them. He himself did not know where they were going afterwards.

A steam-tramway connects Lamia with Port San Marina, and I learned in the course of the morning, that the wounded were being conveyed by means of this tramway for embarkation to steamers anchored out in the Gulf of Lamia opposite the port. I went down to the station to see whether it were possible to join one of the trains. Thousands of refugees were crowded round the terminus of the tramway-line, wringing their hands, and praying the officers in charge if they might climb on the wagons of the train which had been drawn up to a small platform.

Scores and scores of wounded soldiers had been brought on stretchers to the station, and left there in the blazing sunshine. In the semi-panic which prevailed, the few officers who were superintending the entraining of the wounded had clearly lost

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their heads. Villiers and myself, together with Captain Ewart, late of the Seaforth Highlanders, who had joined us, forgot our own anxiety in an indignant compassion for the poor fellows, their wounds beetling in the hot sunshine, and apparently all but forgotten. We made our way to the train, and with that commanding insolence, of which Britons are sometimes accused, took possession of the few wagons which were not heaped up with refugees and their luggage. Gathering two or three soldiers together, we formed a guard, and organizing a bearer party, in the course of an hour or more we had the whole of the wounded who had been left neglected, or at least unattended to, transferred as gently as possible to the wagons.

Frequently we had literally to beat back with fists scores of half-frantic men who were anxious to take possession of the wagons, altogether unmindful of the poor wretches, who from the manner in which they had been mauled about in the terrible passage across the mountains during the night, and repeated transfer from cart to ground and from ground to wagon, must have suffered the agonies of the damned. Emboldened by the success of our expedient, we cleared one of the wagons of an immense quantity of useless baggage, and by that means found room for other five or six and twenty wounded men, the last of

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the batch. Whether the ethics of the proceeding be sound or not, we arrived at the conclusion that we had earned our passage to Port San Marina. As a matter of fact, we gave the signal to the engine-driver that it was time to proceed, and at last we started. It was like tearing one's own flesh to see the writhing of the poor fellows on the floors of the wagons as the engine and wagons bump-bumped across the very unequal permanent way. We did the best we could to ease their position and to shade them from the fierce sun. When we arrived at Port San Marina, there was some organization for the transfer of the wounded from the train. As many as could be accommodated in the very excellent German marquee ambulance-hospital, under the superintendence of Dr. Hirsch, were transferred there. The remainder were carried to the quay and thence rowed out to the hospital-ship *Thessalia.*

While the train was speeding along to Port San Marina, I noticed away to the left the dust of moving cavalry, and on arrival at the port some distance from the quay, there was a squadron of cavalry drawn up. It had constituted the escort of the Crown Prince, and some of his staff, who had made a detour by a cross-road without entering much-excited Lamia, and had reached Port San Marina. Here His Royal Highness and staff

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embarked on a small steam tender and sailed away. Of course there were wild rumours as to the Prince's destination. Some foolishly alleged he had fled to Athens. As a matter of fact he had adopted the sensible course of sailing for the Gulf of Armyro, to consult at Kefalossis the ablest general in his army, Colonel Smolenskis, who had withdrawn his troops to that place and Surpi from Armyro after the success of the Turks on the previous day.

In the course of the afternoon, I procured a small boat and was rowed out to the *Thessalia*, which still remained at anchor, and was permitted to go on board. A small space on the hurricane-deck was occupied by slightly-wounded men, but the whole of the rest of the deck was crowded with refugees, whose distress was pitiable. Many wounded officers found accommodation in the small saloon. Villiers and half-a-dozen others, including myself, were allowed to squeeze ourselves into the captain's cabin. Glad then every one was when very late in the afternoon the anchor was weighed, and the ship began to move. For not a breath of air stirred; the waters of the Gulf were as glass, reflecting the blazing sunshine until the atmosphere glowed like a furnace. I heard that the majority of the wounded had been located in the hold, and a visit there was the last

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satiation of horror. There was no light, and the poor fellows had been packed indiscriminately on the floor. Some effort was made to relieve their suffering by administering sips of water; but what was this when there was so much agony! The place smelled like a charnel-house, and we knew that already several of them were dead and that the life of others was slowly ebbing away.

I was glad to escape on deck, where at any rate it was possible sometimes to obtain a sweet breath of the sea-air. Never did time hang so heavily on laggard wheels as during the few hours' voyage to Chalcis, and I was relieved to get ashore, away from even the neighbourhood of such terrible suffering. All the refugees were disembarked. Many of the worst cases of the wounded were transferred to the English hospital at Chalcis, and steps were taken for the amelioration of the condition of the remainder, who were kept on board for the subsequent voyage to Piræus.

It was close on midnight when we began the search for a means of conveyance to Athens. At the suggestion of a night-journey overland my dragoman struck. It was too dangerous, he said. The pass of Anephorites was haunted with brigands and prisoners who had escaped some time before from the penal establishment at Chalcis. He would rather go into half-a-dozen battles than

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face a night-journey there. He appealed to people in square and café, and most of them agreed with him. "Why not," said he, "wait and go on in the *Thessalia* the next day?" Well, I had had enough of the floating charnel-house, and was not at all certain that she would sail in time to reach Piræus the following day. I said a carriage I must have; pointed out that it was full moon, and as clear as daylight; that we could at least command four revolvers with six shots in each, even if assailed by brigands, who at best or worst were not keen to attack well-armed men. In another hour and a half it would be daylight, and, in fact, I convinced the timid man that we might venture the journey if only he would obtain the conveyance.

A carriage and pair was at last secured at ransom rates, and about half-past one in the morning we were on the way to Thebes, to which point only the proprietor of the carriage agreed to take us. In a couple of hours we had safely surmounted the pass of Anephorites, and at a little roadside shrine our driver, and the man who had accompanied him as a species of guard, descended and made an offering for their safe journey so far. By this time it was full daylight, and the rest of the journey to Thebes was uneventful—through what, under other circumstances, would have been a fascinating country, every

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mile of which was closely associated with classic story. Thebes was reached between five and six o'clock.

Immediately on our arrival we seemed to be surrounded by the whole population anxious to hear the news, and we were compelled to seek refuge from the pressure of the gossips in a café —a fortunate incident, since we induced the good-natured proprietor to bustle about and provide us with some breakfast. While this was being prepared, our dragoman made a reconnaissance. First of all he discovered that the American Correspondent, who had started with the four-in-hand from Lamia early on the previous morning, had not yet passed through Thebes, which was of course a matter of satisfaction to us. In the second place, he induced the proprietor of a carriage to hire it to us with four fairly good horses; and good fortune favouring us, there was a fair prospect of our being first once more to reach the end of the wires to England.

Away we went, about seven o'clock, at a spanking rate, and only slowed down as we began the ascent of the pass of Gyphtocastro, from which we had an exquisite view of the snow-tipped summits of Parnassas and Helicon, and at our feet, once the summit of the pass, over 2000 feet above the level of the sea, had been cleared, an extensive

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panorama of the Bœotian plain. The drive round the beautifully wooded shoulders of Mount Cithæron would have been of passing interest, but for our anxiety to get on. Rather more than half-way to Athens, at the Kahn of Kasa, our driver insisted on resting his horses for an hour, but he promised on receipt of a bribe to bring us to Athens by three o'clock. During our enforced rest here, too nervously anxious to sleep, I devoted the hour to a revision of my despatches.

Resuming our journey shortly after one o'clock, we curved round a succession of ranges of low hills, crossed the pass of Koundoura, and then descended through an exquisitely wooded glen to the village of Mandra, where a short halt was called, and where we were surrounded by quite a crowd of women, who in the most distressful manner chorused, "Turkos, Turkos." Through our dragoman we assured them that there was no possibility of the Turks reaching them there. The descent on to the bay of Eleusis was exceedingly striking, but we stayed not to admire what Leake calls "the most beautiful bay which adorns the winding shores of Greece," nor to investigate the scenes of the Eleusinian mysteries. Our business was to record modern, not to investigate ancient, history. The final pass to be surmounted was that of Daphni, and at last Athens was in view.

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The telegraph office was reached a few minutes after three o'clock. We had accomplished the journey from Thebes in the phenomenal time of eight hours. I handed in my despatches, and on leaving the office the tension relaxed, and the ground began to sway under my feet. This was Wednesday afternoon, and from the previous Saturday morning I had not even had my boots unlaced, and I had only enjoyed, if I may so call it, four hours of sleep. I pulled myself together, and made my way to the pleasing shades of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and the luxury of a hot bath removed the most serious traces of the over-fatigue and over-excitement of the previous four days' trying experiences.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE ARMISTICE SIGNED: CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

DURING the night of Monday and early morning of Tuesday, the 17th and 18th of May, General Macris retired his shattered right wing through mountain-paths on to the line of the Phurka Pass, where he was joined by the Crown Prince's centre, which had marched by the main road from Domokos to Lamia. Naturally the Greek troops were tired and disheartened, and they were not over-well provided with rations. They were left in peace for the most part all Tuesday, but Edhem Pasha advanced his left wing through the recesses of the Othrys range by way of the villages of Gura and Neochorion, in pursuit of the retreating Greeks. The Turkish Commander-in-Chief himself, with the main body of his army, occupied Domokos on Tuesday in force. Indeed, early in the morning, advanced parties of

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Turks had taken possession of the town and set it on fire in several places a few hours after it had been evacuated by the Crown Prince. On the Wednesday forenoon the Turkish left made a vigorous assault on the Greek position at Phurka.

The Greeks were disorganized as well as disheartened, and after two hours' resistance one more order to retreat was given, and in very loose formation indeed they fell back on Taratza, four or five miles from Lamia, where a stand was made by a division, the remainder of the broken army wearily trudging on to the Thermopylæ Pass.

Meanwhile the Crown Prince with his staff had returned from his expedition to Kefalossis, where he had held a Council of War with Smolenskis, who had after Velestino been raised to the rank of General. His Royal Highness made a detour from Stylida by a cross-road, which brought him to the line of defence established by General Macris at Taratza. He was just in time to meet a couple of regiments who were flying in disorder Lamia-wards. By the Prince's personal exertions, backed up by those of his staff, the men were induced to halt and re-form. Led by their officers, with considerable spirit these troops returned, joined General Macris at Taratza, and took part in an engagement which lasted for two hours, and by which the further progress of the enemy was

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checked. While these operations were in progress the Crown Prince received information that an armistice had been signed in Epirus, and he accordingly ordered firing to cease, and dispatched Captain Kondoyanni with a white flag in order to inform the Turkish commander of the fact. After some negotiation an armistice was concluded and signed by Edhem Pasha, I believe, on behalf of the Turks, and by Captain Kondoyanni on behalf of the Crown Prince, the conditions being as follows:—

1. An armistice is concluded without fixing a date.

2. A neutral zone to be fixed by two staff officers on each side in the course of two days between the positions held by the two armies.

3. No flank advance to be allowed.

All that remained now was to settle the terms of the conditions of peace, and these were left to the Ambassadors of the Great Powers in accordance with the note delivered to them by the Greek Government on the 11th May, placing the interests of Greece practically unreservedly in their hands.

Until the final determination of the neutral zone between the two armies, there were several minor skirmishes between the outposts, which might have developed into something more serious but for the firm determination of the Crown Prince to give no

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pretext to the Turkish commander to break the armistice, so important for the cause of stricken Greece. Steps were taken by His Royal Highness to reorganize the army as far as possible, and in order to do so only one division was left at Taratza and on the slopes of the valley of Spercheios. The remainder fell back on the classic line of Thermopylæ. The campaign was over, and no surer proof of this could be given than the disbandment of the Garibaldian and Foreign Legion on the 26th of May. The following order-of-the-day was issued by the Crown Prince from San Marina, where he had established his head-quarters :—

"General His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Thessaly: to the Foreign Legion leaving the Greek camp at Thermopylæ. I transmit the expression of my great satisfaction at the order and discipline which you have shown during the campaign; for your disinterested conduct, and for the bravery with which you have fought on every occasion. The officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the Legion may be sure in leaving Greece that the whole army will always preserve in ineffaceable remembrance the noble men who came forward in the hour of Greece's trial, to show their pro-Greek sentiments and their readiness to fight for us in the

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cause of liberty and justice. Greece will never forget that your blood was shed on the field of battle with that of your gallant commander, Captain Veratasse. This general order will be read to the whole army."

The campaign being over, and my occupation gone, I returned to England.

In closing this imperfect record of my personal experiences and adventures in Greece, I may be permitted a few words as to the position in the near East at the moment of writing (July 12).

The Greek Government placed their interests in the hands of the Great Powers on May 11. This meant that they were anxious, on honourable conditions, for a termination of the war, which was sucking the life-blood of their country, and fast ruining its material prosperity. When the Sultan was approached by the united Ambassadors in Constantinople, he said in effect, "Trouble me not. As a devout Mussulman I am consecrated to the Fast of Bairam. Speak to me some other time." Bairam being finished, instead of addressing himself to the request of the Great Powers to entertain the question of an armistice, the Sultan ordered Edhem Pasha to advance and smash once more the Greeks on their last line of defence in Thessaly. His plan was evidently to occupy every acre of that province which united Europe had

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first given to Greece in the Berlin Congress in 1878 along with Epirus, but which had only been handed over to the Hellenic kingdom in 1881, leaving Epirus still under Pashalik domination.

After the battle of Domokos, Thessaly was actually in the hands of the Turks, organized and administered by them, so far as Turkish administration ever goes beyond the squeezing of the subject populations by ruthless taxation. Then the Sultan ostentatiously professed to bow to the wishes of the Ambassadors, and granted an armistice. He however began at once to shuffle, after the manner of the Osmanli, over the peace negotiations. He conveniently forgot his pledged word, specifically to the Ambassadors, and to the world in general, that in declaring war against Greece he was only acting on the defensive, and that he had no intention of seeking a retrocession of territory which at any time had been under the sway of the Porte. Perhaps he only said that because the Great Powers had also pledged themselves that whether Turkey or Greece were successful in the campaign, which then seemed inevitable, neither would be allowed to reap the fruits of victory, or to disturb the existing map of the south-east of Europe. Mr. Arthur Balfour repeated that pledge in the most solemn manner in the House of Commons on behalf of the British Government.

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For two months the Sultan and his Minister, Tewfik Pasha, simply flouted the so-called concert, or rather discord of Europe, since it was openly canvassed that one at least, if not two Powers were secretly supporting the Sultan in his attitude of procrastination and even of bluster.

There were three points on which the Sultan insisted at the outset. First: that he should retain possession of Thessaly by right of conquest. He pleaded that it would be contrary to Mohammedan law for the Caliph to surrender conquered territory. Second: he wished the capitulations in favour of Greece in the Turkish empire to be extinguished. And third: he suggested a war indemnity amounting, it was reported, to ten or twelve million pounds sterling.

Of course these were impossible conditions of peace, and after a month's fruitless negotiation, the Ambassadors in Constantinople impotently agreed to appoint three Commissions of experts to investigate the whole subject under debate. The first Commission was to consider, not the abolition of capitulations, but their modification, so as to meet certain admitted Turkish grievances. The second was to inquire into the resources of Greece, and the amount of indemnity which she was likely to be able to pay. The third Commission, consisting of the military attachés of the Embassies,

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was to make a delimitation of the frontier of Thessaly, by which certain positions, notably at Analypsis and Rapsani, had since 1881 been regarded as disputed territory, and which might, without violating the principle of the non-disturbance of the map of south-eastern Europe, be handed over to Turkey. These Commissions reported to the Ambassadors, who drew up a note to the Sultan suggesting the reasonable modifications of the capitulations, the mild rectification of the mountain frontier-barrier, and limiting the war indemnity to four millions sterling.

With truly oriental diplomacy, the Sultan threw over the idea of claiming the retrocession of the whole of Thessaly. But he was willing to accept, as a frontier line, the river Peneios, although in the meantime he had the audacity to nominate a Greek Archbishop of Larissa, the capital of Thessaly, which lies south of his own riverine line, and to farm out, according to iniquitous Turkish fashion, the taxes of Thessaly. While these farcical proceedings were going on at Constantinople, Thessaly was being effectually looted, and the plunder transported over the Maluna Pass to Macedonia and thence to Turkey. The vast majority of the peasantry refused to return to their homes, notwithstanding the proclamations of the Turkish military and civil governors. They or

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their fathers had had too sad experience of Turkish government, and they trusted not the bland assurances made by Edhem Pasha of protection for their lives and property. Nearly every village in Thessaly has been burned, and this year's crops of grain destroyed. An estimate has been made that the loss to the native Greek population from the ruined crops and their dissipated herds amounts to no less than a hundred million drachmas.

Latterly the Sultan, with a sublime disregard of every consideration except his own selfish interests, sent appeals broadcast to the Sovereigns and Governments of Europe, collectively and individually, repeating *ad nauseam* his pleas for the settlement of the Peneios frontier. If reports from all the European capitals are to be believed, these appeals were met with the curt advice to accept the terms of peace formulated by the Ambassadors, representing united Europe. The Russian Chancellor's note, it is alleged, was especially frank in the warning it gave to the Sultan, that by his attitude he was endangering his empire and dynasty.

The question has engaged profound attention in Britain; and Lord Salisbury, on July 6, made a remarkable deliverance in the House of Lords. Reference had been made during a debate upon it, to the fact that the Berlin Congress of 1878,

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which had "consolidated the Turkish Empire," to use Lord Beaconsfield's phrase, had considerably altered the map of the Balkan Peninsula and created a semi-independent Bulgaria; had presented Bosnia and Hertzigovina to Austria; given extension of territory to Montenegro and Greece; handed over the Dobrudtcha to Roumania; had retrocessed Bessarabia to Russia, and given to the latter power a vast extension of territory in Asia Minor, had only taken one month for all its deliberations, whereas the Conference or Congress of Ambassadors at Constantinople had been two months vainly, it would seem, trying to reach terms of peace between Turkey and Greece.

Lord Salisbury admitted the historical accuracy of the statement; but, said he, Prince Bismarck was in the chair at Berlin, and if his Highness had been in the chair at Constantinople, the result would have been very different. Moreover, continued the noble Marquis, a very powerful Russian army was within a stone's throw of Constantinople, and any suggestion from Prince Bismarck that the failure of the Conference would result in the movement of that army, did undoubtedly produce an effect on Turkish deliberations which we desiderate at the present moment. The delay in arriving at terms of peace was a delay in Constantinople itself.

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Hitherto it had been accepted that the Eastern Question was being dealt with by the Six Great Powers of Europe, viz.—Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Italy. Mark the significance of Lord Salisbury's next sentence. "I do not presume to judge it, but there would be no delay so far as the Five Powers are concerned. They are agreed. I do not know that they have disagreed on any point. I won't aver that they are agreed absolutely upon every detail."

Does this imply not only that there is disagreement on the matter of details of the settlement between five of the Great Powers; but that one, while nominally remaining within the concert, is yet not of it?

Lord Salisbury then went on in the *rôle* of the devil's advocate to admit that it was an undoubted fact that great deliberation and circumspection had always characterized the action of the Ottoman Government. This deliberation and circumspection, however, he thought, had been carried to an excess at the present time, and Europe had received no definitive opinion of the Turkish Government upon the three all-important questions of the frontier, the capitulations, and the indemnity. There was a certain air of cynicism in his statement that whether we got any nearer a solution of these problems belonged rather to the domain of pro-

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phecy than to political speculation. Then came the truly Delphian pronouncement—"I would only recommend my noble friend to consider the situation in 1897, and add that in proportion as the situation in 1897 can be made more analogous to that of 1878, in that proportion we increase our hopes of an early and satisfactory settlement."

Is this then a more or less lucid hint that a new man is to be put in the chair at the meetings of the Ambassadors at Constantinople—a man of the blood-and-iron type of Bismarck? And is an army or a fleet to be brought to within a stone's throw of Constantinople? Two days after this deliverance, namely on July 8, the Ambassadors at Constantinople delivered to the Porte a collective note, "couched in very severe terms." For years past the Sultan has sardonically received collective notes, couched in very severe terms, and thrown them into the waste-paper basket. At any rate he has practically laughed them to scorn, and gone his own violent and wicked way.

Meantime the situation is grave enough to excite alarm in the breast of even the most headlong and cynical monarch or statesman of civilized Europe. There are now beyond the northern shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles no fewer than 450,000 well-armed and equipped Moslems, flushed with victory, and inspired by a

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fanatical belief in the renaissance of Islam. It is probably a greater army than the Sultan has had in Europe since the Turks were at the gates of Vienna.

The problem is not simply the retrocession of Thessaly, or the amount of a war indemnity, which could be guaranteed by any one of the Great Powers without involving their people in a penny of extra taxation. It is the probable kindling of the flames of an Armageddon in south-eastern Europe, in which the fate of Christian nations would be involved, and a great race and religious conflict be maintained for years. The danger will remain imminent, and the sufferings of innocent populations in one of the fairest portions of the earth will be multiplied, until the Great Powers cease to palter with notes addressed to the Sultan in however severe terms, and compel him to listen to the voice of reason by an active demonstration of both fleets and armies.

THE END

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